

ANGLO-AMERICAN CONFERENCE ON

CHRISTIAN UNION



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CHRISTIAN UNION

Being eight addresses delivered at the
ANGLO-AMERICAN CONFERENCE ON
CHRISTIAN UNION

held at
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PREFACE

THE idea of an Anglo-American Conference on Christian Union originated at an "English Tea Meeting," held during the Centenary Convention of the Disciples of Christ at Pittsburgh, U.S.A., in October, 1909. The date for this Conference was subsequently fixed for the first week in July, 1910, following upon the epoch-making Missionary gathering at Edinburgh, to which such frequent reference is made in the addresses reproduced in this volume.

The responsibility of organizing the Conference was assumed by the Christian Association, the co-operating organization of the Disciples of Christ of Great Britain, assisted by a small advisory committee of American Disciples.

The speakers and chairmen were distinctly informed that they would be left free to speak their own mind on the themes under consideration, without reference to what might be said by other speakers or to the position taken by the religious body promoting the Conference. Evidence of the freedom with which they did this will appear upon reading the addresses. Although some of the addresses have been shortened because of limited space, care has been taken to leave out nothing for reasons of non-agreement with other addresses or with the general teaching of the Disciples of Christ. The value of this volume is largely enhanced thereby.

It is an encouraging sign of the times that the speakers so freely took advantage of this quite natural liberty which was granted them, and used the utmost freedom of speech, not only as related to the teaching of the various denominations, but freedom also in their treatment of doctrines and practices of their own denominations. When a Baptist declares that he would do little to make a man a Baptist, but would do much to make him a Christian; when a prominent clergyman of the Church of England does not so much as mention episcopacy in an address on the bases of union, and only refers to uniformity to exclude it; when two young Disciples show sufficient independence to express opinions contrary to the commonly accepted teaching and practice of their people; and when a Congregationalist makes known the fact that he once wrote an introduction to a book on baptism, written by two Congregationalists, in which he set forth the Baptist position on that ordinance so strongly that he convinced a number of ordinarily good Congregationalists that that position was correct, sectarianism is in a bad way, but the Kingdom of God will abound. It is the hope of the Kingdom of God, if the despair of denominationalism! These speakers may not be right—and many in their own respective religious bodies may denounce them as wrong—but at any rate they are so far free from denominational fetters. This is hopeful in the interest of truth.

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INTRODUCTION

LESLIE W. MORGAN, B.A., B.D.

(General Secretary Christian Association).

THE best defence of denominationalism is losing its force. It has always been contended that denominationalism gives opportunity to emphasise truths that otherwise would be neglected. There was at one time an element of truth in the claim. At any rate this thought has been one of the chief incentives in the founding of most denominations.

But this has led often to an over-emphasis of certain truths, through the operation of a law no less constant than that governing the swing of the pendulum. After bitter experience and much sharp contention the useful discovery has been made that it is not sufficient compensation for the neglect of a truth in one quarter for it to be over-emphasised in another. The effect is not less disastrous upon those placing undue emphasis on any given truth, than upon those neglecting it.

Truth is relative and no number of isolated truths can ever equal the whole. The best interest of truth is not served by collecting isolated truths and keeping them alive in denominational preserves.

Happily there are now many poachers. Men are refusing to be kept within denominational fences, and when a breach is made by which one man passes out, the same breach serves for another to come in. The truth even as denominationally conceived is not protected or preserved by denominationalism. Striking evidence of this is apparent in the addresses contained in this volume, as has been pointed out in the Preface. The hedges that have been planted no longer stand on the real lines of division.

If denominationalism in the abstract can be defended, then all the laws of logic and reason, all the requirements of consistency and common sense would demand that a new survey should be carried out and the hedges re-arranged. If there are to be hedges at all, they ought to be in the right places. At present denominational names connote but little. They are out-of-date as a means of classification. There are men in every denomination who find more perfect fellowship with men of kindred mind in other denominations than they do with the majority in their own. The logic of denominationalism is fellowship of kindred minds. But denominations have failed, in most cases, to keep their own truth intact. And to the extent that they may have succeeded in this they have failed proportionately in world conquest. But the difficulties (if "difficulties" is the right word) of overlapping fellowship are not to be met by a new survey and certainly not by the uprooting and replanting of hedges. We have all but finished with denominationalism; it has lost its chief defence.

At one time when a new truth was discovered, or when an old truth seemed to be neglected, a few men put their heads together and started a new denomination for its preservation and defence. There was at that time no other way for

it. It was the only chance any new truth had. But now the sincere investigator is at last being welcomed in the realm of religion, in a spirit as truly scientific as it is Christian. Formerly the man who discovered a new truth was burned at the stake; but it was eventually discovered that a dead heretic was more dangerous than a live one; after this, heretics were simply ejected. Thereupon those who were excommunicated organized a new denomination and soon gained a larger influence and following, aided by their supposed sacrifice for the cause of truth, than they would have obtained had they been left within the fold. To-day, trials for heresy are almost unheard of. Mere policy may at first have dictated the change, now a truer Christian charity sanctifies it.

The discovery of truths that once often led to the impoverishment of existing denominations now adds enrichment to the whole Church. We are on the high road to the acceptance of the maximum basis. The very essence of denominationalism—whatever may be the high claim of any self-centred organizations or self-satisfied individuals—is the minimum of truth, the one or more truths which, according to a given denomination, are wholly neglected or under-emphasized by other denominations.

The permanent preservation of any denomination depends, in the very nature of the case, upon that denomination feeding upon something in addition to the common food of all Christians. In the increasing scarcity of difference in great doctrinal issues; in the vanishing power of appeal once found in petty quarrels that have long since lost their significance; in the decreasing ability of party leaders to arouse enthusiasm among the rank and file by an appeal to prestige and pride—a decrease due to an increased knowledge and appreciation of what others have done—special diet for the nourishment of denominational life is becoming scarce. In consequence, denominationalism, as such, is anæmic. To rally strength for world conquest in the interest of its own upbuilding will soon be out of the question. Happily higher motives are finding place and the world's redemption may be more confidently looked for than ever before. Some denominations have died because that for which they peculiarly stood has become obsolete through changing conditions or growing ideals; others have died, or are dying a nobler death, through the triumph of their principles in becoming the common possession of all Christians. In losing their life they have found it.

With a willingness to accept truth from whatever source, Christian union is becoming increasingly possible. Not only the toleration but the harmonising of dissimilar elements—a necessity pointed out by several speakers—is coming into the realm of practical politics. What every denomination has achieved, the united Church potential ought not to despair of accomplishing.

After all, our divisions will one day be regarded as but an incident, viewed in relation to the whole course of Christian history. When the re-union sentiment, which now prevails, has existed for as long a period as that in which the spirit of division flourished, vast changes will have taken place. Warfare between nations will some day be recalled as a troubled dream, and the disruption of Christianity as a horrid nightmare.

This new spirit is but of to-day. Yesterday we were glorying in our divisions and counting our fighting spirit as our chief asset. Perhaps it was; perhaps it is still; but we are learning better whom to fight. And in the discovery of the common enemy we are discovering our common friends.

Christian Union is coming. All the signs indicate it. We are too nearly Christian to be content with anything less. We have gone too far to turn back. There are difficulties, but they are surmountable. The world's need demands it. The prayer of our Lord makes it imperative.

The progress already made is most encouraging. There is space to mention only a few of the steps that have been taken, but a few are mentioned as examples of the most significant tendency of this generation.

An outstanding example of union is that of the United Free Church of Scotland, formed in 1900 from the United Presbyterian Church and the Free Church of Scotland. Now in 1912 there are signs that the disruption of 1843 may soon be healed in the re-union of Presbyterianism, by the bringing together of the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church. A joint commission rendered a report to the 1912 Spring Assemblies of both bodies which was very favourably considered. The relation to be borne to the state is the outstanding point of difficulty. In 1907 the United Methodist Church was formed by the amalgamation of the Bible Christian, Methodist New Connection and the United Methodist Free Church bodies. The question of a United Free Church of England has been up for consideration for the past two or three years, and at the 1912 National Council Meetings at Cheltenham it was agreed that a Commission of enquiry should be appointed. This Commission is now in process of formation. Special attention was given to the subject of Christian Union at the Lambeth Conference in 1908 at which 249 Episcopal Bishops from all parts of the world were in attendance. The problem of re-union was considered in all its phases and a plan of campaign was mapped out and a commission of fifty-six Bishops was appointed to carry out the various objects of the Conference.

In America many steps toward union have been taken and some actual unions have been formed. The Presbyterian and Cumberland Presbyterian Churches united some years ago, although not without certain difficulties and secessions. Several local congregations of the Baptists and Disciples of Christ have formed union Churches, and the two bodies have co-operated with mutual advantage in new fields in Western Canada. These two bodies, together with the Free Baptists, have met bi-annually for some years past in a joint Congress for the consideration of questions of mutual concern, and more especially questions that might effect the ultimate union of the three bodies. The Disciples of Christ and the Free Baptists have a union college in the state of New York. In July 1910, the Episcopal Church of America established the "Christian Unity Foundation." Its purpose is "to promote Christian Unity at home and throughout the world, by the method of Research and Conference, and "to this end to gather and disseminate accurate information relative to the faith and works of all Christian bodies." The co-operation of all denominations is being sought in preparation for a "World's Congress on Faith and Order" to be held four or five years hence. In view of this gathering, and in accord with the declared purpose of the Foundation, a series of "Studies" of various denominations is in course of preparation. * "Study Number One" of this series has been issued and consists of a carefully prepared and sympathetic statement of the history and teachings of the Disciples of Christ.

* A copy of this Study may be had gratis by applying to the Secretary of the Christian Unity Foundation, Rev. Arthur Lowndes, D.D., 143, East 37th Street, New York; or to the Christian Association, "Wringleiff," Priory Rd., Hornsey, London.

On the same day, and at the very hour when the Christian Unity Foundation was being formed at Cincinnati, Ohio, the Disciples of Christ were taking the final steps at Topeka, Kansas, in the organization of a Commission on Christian Union. This Commission acts as a clearing house for all questions relating to the problem, and issues a quarterly pamphlet called the "Christian Union Library" containing papers and addresses delivered by men of various denominations on the subject of Christian Union. The Congregationalists have a Committee on "Comity, Federation and Unity," and the Presbyterians a similar one on "Church Co-operation and Union." The Home Missions Secretaries of several of the leading denominations in America recently met for the purpose of laying plans to more effectually establish churches in neglected regions in the Western States and at the same time prevent an unseemly scramble for the best centres, with consequent over-lapping. The "Federal Council of the Churches of Christ of America," embraces in its membership every Protestant denomination of any importance, and is destined to not only make co-operative work possible and effective, but to prevent much over-lapping in new districts. While in the main the American Churches are conservatively evangelical, they are fast becoming interested in social rather than theological questions; and to this tendency the Federal Council is both contributing and offering a common ground for service. Who knows but that union may come by the realization of our brother's need at home and abroad!

In Canada a basis has been agreed upon by a joint Committee representing the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational bodies, looking to the union of these three leading denominations. The union has already received the sanction of the Congregationalists and the vote so far as taken in the other bodies gives promise of a successful issue. The ground in this case has been well prepared by the union, completed some years ago, of all branches of the Presbyterian family into one group, and the gathering together of all the members of the Methodist family into another group. This is union by the natural process, just as disunion is against nature, inasmuch as it has been brought about mainly by the dividing of those who originally were of the same family type.

In Australia there has been wholesale discussion and much necessary consideration of the scandal of disunion. This has been carried on between all of the Churches more or less, including both the Episcopal and the non-Episcopal bodies. Negotiations between the Presbyterian and Episcopal bodies are worthy of special reference, inasmuch as a suggestion was made for overcoming the difficulty arising from the doctrine of the Episcopacy, viz., that the standing of present ministers should be recognised, but that future ones should be consecrated by the Bishops. This compromise has its advocates in both churches. The Presbyterians and Moravians have for many years united in their work among the Aborigines of North Queensland, the former supplying the money and the latter the men. The latest step in Australia is that taken by the Baptist and Congregational bodies looking to mutual acquaintance and a closer co-operation by means of an exchange of certain courtesies.

In South Africa an ambitious scheme for the founding of a united Church was under way for some years, but unfortunately the consummation was recently defeated owing to certain disagreements. In this case it is said the younger men were the chief obstacles to union; but even young men cannot live always, and

* A sample copy may be had gratis by addressing the Commission on Christian Union, 537, N. Fulton Av., Baltimore, Md., U.S.A.

in a rising tide of any worthy cause hope lies in the future. That the tide is rising is certain; the above incident is but an eddy.

In the Mission fields the greatest strides have been taken towards actual union. Those who are in the midst of heathen needs feel most keenly the weakness and hence the folly of our divisions.

If early steps had not been taken the confusion resulting from want of united action would have been greater abroad than at home, for on the foreign field there are many societies at work representing the same or similar denominations, with like doctrines and polity, but from different parts of the Christian world. Thus there was the possibility of the heathen world being asked, in addition to the sufficiently difficult task of distinguishing between the broader lines of denominational difference, to perform the impossible task of judging the difference between, say, seventeen kinds of Presbyterians and twenty-two kinds of Methodists, not to mention the possibility of misunderstanding due to Congregationalism or Episcopacy being promulgated in one station with an American intonation and in another with an English accent!

It is a matter for congratulation that the Church in every part of the world has during the past hundred years or so, which cover the period of modern missions, caught the vision of its world-wide duty, but the Missionary Societies that have sprung up everywhere are a threat of confusion and wasted energy. The great oceans are vast, with seeming room for vessels to sail at will, but they cannot be traversed in safety without observing the rules of navigation.

It is but natural that missions representing Churches of like polity and doctrine should unite first of all. The Presbyterians have led the way in this kind of union. As long ago as 1862 the missionaries of the Presbyterian Church of England and the Reformed Church in America working in Amoy, China, united in a single presbytery, the sanction of the home authorities of the Reformed Church not being obtained till the missionaries had shown a union sentiment worthy of a later day by threatening to resign unless such sanction was given. This example of union in a single district in China was followed in 1877 in Japan by the union of various branches of Presbyterianism, eventually including six distinct bodies of that faith, to form a national "Church of Christ in Japan."

Since these early days almost all denominations in all mission fields have been setting their own houses in order.* The work in even this respect however is far from complete, nor would its completion fully meet the case. There are those who contend that while this is the line of least resistance it is not the most helpful line along which to proceed. A Baptist Missionary from China declared at Edinburgh that he would rather have the co-operation of a brother Christian near at hand than that of a brother Baptist in another part of the country. It was on this principle that the Presbyterian Churches of South India asked and obtained leave to separate from the Presbyterian General Assembly of India in order to unite with the United Church of South India.

The campaign for a wider union proceeds apace in every field, varying in different countries and districts between comity, federation and organic union.

The United Church of South India was formed in 1907, composed for the most part of those of Congregational and Presbyterian origin. The South India

* See Report of Commission viii, pp. 88-103 World's Missionary Conference, 1910.

Missionary Association has a membership of over 450 missionaries, and by their co-operation they are able to face many problems that could not be taken up by any one mission alone. For many years the Church Missionary Society, the United Free Church and the Wesleyan Missionary Society, have co-operated in making the Madras Christian College the leading academic institution of Southern India, and now the Church of Scotland has joined forces in the work of the College. In Calcutta four missions join in carrying on the United Missionary Training College for Women, and in Delhi the Cambridge Mission and the English Baptist Mission co-operate. Serampore College, founded more than one hundred years ago by Wm. Carey and his colleagues, and rightly characterized as the cradle of modern missions, has granted degrees since 1902 by a Faculty representative of practically all Protestant bodies, and recently it has been reorganized as a Union Theological College of University standing, looking ultimately to its becoming a Christian University for India. A Conference was held at Jubbulpore in 1909 and again two years later for the purpose of organizing a "Federation of Christian Churches in India," and such an organization has been formed and is receiving the support of practically all missions except those of the Episcopalians, the Lutherans and the American Baptists. These bodies stand out on account of their inability to conscientiously comply with the requirement of inter-communion and fellowship.* The first two bodies above named took no part in the negotiations. That Christian union in some quarters is proceeding by only steps and stages, slow and measured, is no evidence that it will not ultimately be fully established. On the contrary it is more likely by that means to not only avoid reaction but to contribute to its permanency.

The strongest union sentiment at Edinburgh came from China. A Chinese Christian declared that the historic quarrels and the finely wrought theological distinctions of the Church in the West had no meaning for them. They have no words in the Chinese for giving expression to western denominational nomenclature, and they are not to be blamed for being loath to create them. Quite aside from a certain native desire to be free as soon as possible from foreign control there is a strong desire for a Church of Christ for China that will comprehend all who are of Protestant faith. The whole situation was comprehensively considered at the Centenary Conference at Shanghai in 1907. Unlike the Jubbulpore Conferences, representatives of all Protestant bodies carrying on work in China participated in the Shanghai Conference. While there were evidences of differences of opinion, some desiring to proceed at once to union, others holding it as the ultimate ideal but not for the time being practicable, while still others were not willing to commit themselves to even a definite ideal, all agreed in the action of the Conference. This resolved itself into two separate lines of procedure. One line was to encourage the union of bodies of the same ecclesiastical order, and a committee, consisting of eight sub-committees made up of representatives of the different types of polity, was appointed to encourage union movements of this kind. A second committee was appointed to further the organization of Provincial Councils throughout China, in connection with "The Christian Federation of China," which was brought into being at this Conference.

* The clause bearing upon this passed at the first Jubbulpore Conference in 1909 asked the federated churches "to recognise the validity of each other's ordinances, ministry, membership and discipline, without thereby committing themselves to approval of particular methods or practices," but at the 1911 Conference this was altered to read, "to recognise each other's discipline and to welcome members of other federatory Churches to Christian fellowship and communion."

Encouraging reports along both of these lines of endeavour are continually reaching this country. Some difficulty is being experienced in linking up the scattered denominational missions of similar family types on account of the isolation of some of these, and the vast distances to be traversed. If this difficulty accentuates the desirability of a closer unity on broader lines in given districts and provinces it will have served a good purpose. The latest word to hand from China tells of the quite recent formation of a "Holy Catholic Church of China" by the co-operation of English and American Episcopal Missionary Bishops. If the title sounds somewhat exclusive of the major portion of the Christian forces of China, at any rate it is hoped that the new organization may be truly inclusive of the hitherto more or less scattered forces of those adhering to the Episcopal order, and that eventually a wider union may be consummated. In Western China the achievements seem to be specially noteworthy. They are there determined to have ultimately one United Protestant Church. At present their co-operation in education, medical work, publication and evangelisation leaves but little to be desired, short of actual union. In various Provinces and cities of China there is practical union in many kinds of work. In Nankin there is a Union University, Union Bible School, Union Medical College and Union Nurses Training School, and next year there will be a Union Women's School and a Union Language School. At Tsinanfu in the province of Shantung the American Presbyterian and English Baptist Missions have formed a United Protestant Church for the district, each still retaining a certain amount of independence, but aiming to gradually build up a work that will eventually be self-contained and independent. These two bodies also join in the support of Shantung Christian University with its Colleges of Arts and Science, Medicine and Theology.

In Japan the union movement has developed more along the line of the amalgamation of family types, of which Presbyterians, Episcopalians and Methodists are notable examples. All of these have also conceded a certain amount of native control. Comity, including division of territory, has been somewhat more difficult in Japan than in some other fields, on account of the smallness of the country and the more common practice of moving from one place to another. Every mission has natural desire to follow its converts. However, the utmost goodwill prevails and a forward step has been taken in the realization of a closer unity by the reorganization of what had previously borne the title of the Evangelical Alliance, as "The Federation of Churches in Japan." A united effort is now being strongly advocated for establishing a Christian University for Japan, together with a carefully planned secondary and high school system leading up to it. It is contended that the mission schools have failed to keep pace with the advance of non-Christian education and that it is impossible to adequately deal with the situation without united action.*

Space forbids a further review of union movements on the foreign field. Many further significant instances might be given from many lands. These few are named to inspire hope and to give incentive for further action. The end is not yet.

The union is by no means complete even on the foreign field, nor can it be so long as the union is a union of denominations, with the ultimate authority vested in them rather than in the united church. This cannot perhaps be

* See article in *Japan Evangelist* for December, 1911 and review in *International Review of Missions* for April, 1912.

bettered for the present, since the native Church is not yet able to stand alone, and the home Church is still divided. The ideal, both at home and abroad, is not a union of denominations, still retaining their separate identities, but a union of Christians, co-operating through local congregations in a central organization responsible alone to the whole body of believers. A lesson of the Edinburgh Conference is that the native Church in almost every field would hasten Christian union if left to themselves. Our historic differences mean nothing to them. The missionaries themselves would hasten the union in many quarters—so urgent do they see the need to be—were it not that their hand is stayed by the Home Boards, and the Home Boards in turn are kept back by the conservatism of their constituents and by the inertia of denominational machinery. If denominational tradition were offended, it is conscientiously argued by those whose action halts before conviction, the funds would suffer and the welfare of the missions would be jeopardised. The action is legitimate to a point, but it lacks faith. If the repetition of denominational shibboleths brings forth a more generous response for preaching a denominational gospel to the heathen, than would a well-considered and sincere attempt on the mission field to answer the prayer of our Lord that His disciples may be one, "that the world may believe," it is a poor commentary upon present day Christianity. It ought not to require great faith on the part of the Church to believe that the shortest route to the conversion of the world is that which is indicated by Jesus. It was the deliberate finding of the Commission on the carrying of the Gospel to all the World that by co-operation the forces in the field could be *doubled, without the addition of a single man to the existing staffs*. The effect at home would not be less beneficial.

Edinburgh, 1910! is a hopeful sign of tendencies both at home and abroad. Proposals were there adopted, without opposition, which were not even dreamed of at previous Conferences. One of these was the appointment of a Continuation Committee to make effectual valuable decisions and plans and to carry forward what had been begun by the various Commissions. This committee, under ten sections, has already done much valuable work and has laid plans for the future that will, in the first place, minimise the evils of division, and then give to the Church a vision of the larger things possible in world-wide endeavour by the union of her forces.

"Soon shall the slumbering morn awake,
From wandering stars of error freed,
When Christ the bread of heaven shall break
For saints that own a common creed.

The walls that fence His flocks apart,
Shall crack and crumble in decay,
And every tongue and every heart
Shall welcome in the new-born day.

Then shall His glorious church rejoice
His word of promise to recall,
'One sheltering fold, one Shepherd's voice,
One God and Father over all.'"

Holmes.

Christian Union Demanded by the World's Need

REV. T. E. RUTH
(Baptist)

BY courtesy of your Committee, I have to speak on "Christian Union demanded by the World's Need" a subject as comprehensive as it is vital. "Christian Union" and the "World's Need" were united in the bonds of holy matrimony in the very inception of Christianity and their divorce has been disastrous in the weakening of faith and in the slowness of world conquest. Concentration on the world's evangelism unites the Churches and when the Churches are one the world will believe. That is the moral of the epoch-making missionary conference at Edinburgh. Christianity stands for a united character—a physical, mental, moral, spiritual, unity; for a united Church—a local, national, catholic, unity; for a united World—a Christianised civilisation, a universal brotherhood, an earth-and-heaven, temporal-and-eternal unity.

The terms of my subject—determined for me, are as severely logical as they are cosmic and Christian—"Christian Union demanded by the World's need." It is organic union that is meant rather than mystical unity. It is the denominational dynamic without the denominational limitation. Fraternal fellowship may be an inter-denominational necessity, federation of denominational forces an imperative need, but Christ's prayer will not be answered and the world's needs will not be adequately met apart from organic union. I do not know, no dictionary can elucidate and no man I have met can explain, what is inorganic union. Fellowship itself must be organised. Federation cannot be an inorganic thing. Inorganic union is not only a contradiction in terms but an impossibility even in our illogical life. The world has many needs and the Churches have many resources, and the conception of union in the mind of Christ when He prayed for His disciples and for the world "that they all may be one . . . that the world may believe," and in the expositions of the Apostles, implies diversities of gifts and diversities of operation, but Christ's body was never meant to be inorganic. It is organic union that is demanded by the world's need.

Denominational Christianity fails to meet the needs of the world because the Church and the world have outgrown denominational necessity just as the body has outgrown certain of the animal necessities in the process of evolution. The consummation and climax of Christian evolution will be wanting, the Kingdom of God will be delayed and the travail of Christ's soul prolonged until the Churches cease to be competitive and become simply Christian. I am not denying that denominations have been necessary, they have emphasized certain aspects of truth apt to be over-looked, and the truths for which they stood will abide, but it is the divine mission of denominations to labour for their own extinction. The denomination

that is divinely successful will cease to be; for the truths to which it witnessed will have won universal recognition. And I pray that the Baptist denomination to which I belong may be divinely successful.

Christian Union is demanded by denominational needs for the diversities between branches of the same denomination are sometimes so acute that local pulpits are rival platforms and the only hope of full orb'd vision is in the larger unity. I am a Baptist and regard infant baptism as a prolific source of evil but I have come to believe that it is not a hundredth part the evil that disunion is, either in its effect upon Christian character or upon the Church in its world service. I would do little to make a man a Baptist but I would do a great deal to make him a Christian, and I should know that, immediately, whatever the denominationalists would do with him, he would become a member of the invisible Church of Christ and that he would give his personal experience some public expression. And the whole world is waiting for denominational aggression to make away for the consuming passion of personal and universal evangelism. The world is waiting for a Church that is simply Christian. Denominationalism is being weighed in the balances and found wanting. As I shall show you presently the world is making up its mind to be Christian without it. There are times when we sing, as with the noise of brazen trumpets,

“We are not divided, all one body, we—
One in hope and doctrine, one in Charity.”

But we know what a big lie it is, what a travesty of the real situation, what an affront against high Heaven! We do not deceive ourselves and the world holds us in derision.

There is a great deal that is discreditable and very little that is divine about our divisions, and when we attempt to meet the world's needs we begin to realize the utter iniquity of charging God with our party prejudices. But the marvellous development of foreign missions will not allow us to see in the decline of denominationalism any argument for despair. World evangelism, partial as it is, proclaims with prophetic authority that the Church of the future will be established not by law, nor by creed. Christianity cannot be politically planned. Eternal issues do not depend on any impossible intellectual agreement. Law has failed the world. So has Creed. Hierarchies and orthodoxies are time-born, coloured by circumstances, shaped by contingency, reflecting a thousand irrelevancies. We are returning to what Matthew Arnold called “the sweet reasonableness of Jesus,” to the Catholic Church, established by love, the simple comprehensive Church of Christ—not necessarily to the Church that bears that name but to the Church that makes much less of the label and much more of the life—that knows no limits save those of spiritual affinity and sympathy and no credal and ceremonial tests but the faith that is fidelity, moral temper, spiritual affection, the filial spirit and the spirit of service.

Christian Union is demanded by the World of Christian Character. Character-creating forces are not denominational. Saintship is not sectarian. I belong to what I believe to be the best

denomination in the world, but Baptists have no monopoly of the best. Indeed the best thing about the denomination is the catholicity and world-consciousness into which it is merging. That is its man-making power. If I were to be shut up within Baptist barriers, having fellowship only with Baptist brethren, knowing only Baptist beatitudes, I should be a bigot and no man. Life here would be a limited and a loveless thing. There would be no chance for character completion. And a Baptist Heaven would be no Heaven to me. And if this is to be said about the best denomination what is to be said about the worst? The fact is that even in denominational life the essential things are undenominational. Baptists have no monopoly of loyalty, Congregationalists of liberty, Methodists of passion, Anglicans of reverence, or Romans of devotion. These are the elements of character, and in every man's nature there is an eclectic insistence on Christian Union. The saints of all the sects have their unsectarian ministry. Spurgeon was infinitely bigger than Baptist. Dale was not merely a Congregational theologian, John Wesley merely a Wesleyan, Robertson of Brighton exclusively Anglican and Thomas à Kempis only a Romanist. And as with virtue so with Truth. And Truth in all its domains. The stars are not sectarian; neither are flowers. Gravitation, electricity, light, radium—these are undenominational. And as with Science so with History and Art and Literature. Simply in the interests of character, of full orb'd faith and rounded life, it is time that the Churches were at least as wise as the British Association. Our divisions, our artificial barriers, our sectarian shibboleths are all condemned by the very Gospel we preach,—the common Fatherhood of God, the common Brotherhood of Man, the common consciousness of sin, the common Saviourhood of Christ, the common privilege of prayer, and the common sanctity of life. Moreover, they are condemned as unscientific by the very constitution of scientific societies, and unbusinesslike by every successful commercial concern.

Christian Union is demanded by the world of personal character. From the needs of the individual we pass to the needs of the community, and I say that *Christian Union is demanded by the World of rural Religion*. I think of my native village nestling in a lovely Devon valley with its Anglican Church large enough to accommodate all the villagers, and of its two rival Methodist Chapels either of which is large enough for all the Nonconformist worshippers of the neighbourhood, and this is Paradise compared with some other little villages where Congregationalists, Baptists and various Methodists aid in effectively advertising the unbusinesslike methods of the modern Church in building the Kingdom of God. I have a letter from a Minister in a small country town where there are only nine hundred Nonconformists with seven sanctuaries and four Nonconformist ministers. And these instances could be multiplied indefinitely. Christian Union is demanded by the hamlets, villages and small towns of our land. If Christ's prayer were answered the village would believe. The same thing applies to larger towns and cities with even greater force.

Christian Union is demanded by the World of civic Religion, where denominationalism is obviously on the wane and the sin of schism has well-nigh slain the effective ministry of the Church. The notorious report of the Liverpool Free Church Commission of enquiry into the religious condition of the city, in its exposure of sectarian aggression, of waste of redemptive forces through lack of responsible cohesion, of useless but exceedingly expensive machinery and ministry—is unwittingly the most unanswerable demand for Christian Union with which I am acquainted from the standpoint of the claimant needs of a great city. And Liverpool conditions are not unique.

I arrive at Southampton from South Africa—where the failure of denominationalism is exhibited on a vast scale—and I stand in the High Street at the corner of Ogle Road. On the other side of the street is a large Congregational Church. I stand outside the Church of Christ. Almost next door is the Philharmonic Hall, where a company of Baptists are worshipping on Sundays and I am within full view of Portland Baptist Chapel. I ask an intelligent man in the street in what way the Baptists in the Philharmonic Hall differ from the Baptists in Portland Chapel and he tells me there is no difference. I ask if both congregations could worship in one building and he replies, "Yes." I ask in what way these Baptists differ from the "Church of Christ." He replies that so far as he can understand there is no difference. I ask if the three congregations could worship in one building and he replies, "Certainly." I ask what it is that distinguishes these churches from the other churches in the community and he replies, "Only the question of baptism." I ask if these three churches are in any other respect like unto the Congregational Church over the way and he replies, "Precisely alike in government and doctrine, in everything save baptism as far as I can understand." I ask if there would be room in that great building for the four congregations and he replies, "Quite." I ask him why they do not unite and leave the method of baptism to the individual conscience and he replies, "Cussedness." And without agreeing or disagreeing with his diagnosis, I reflect on the waste of homiletic genius and of more costly material, on the Saviour's prayer for Christian Union, and the needs of the town and the world. And I turn to Dr. Horton's little book on "The Re-union of English Christendom" and read of Hampstead proper—"If the four Episcopal churches and the four Nonconformist Churches were in cordial co-operation those eight congregations of Christian people could thoroughly deal with the religious needs of the district. They could make sure that every house was periodically visited and every soul personally confronted with the claims of Christ . . . and the lamentable reproach might be rolled away that many persons live for years in the district and find no one who cares for their souls." And not only would the aggressive work within the district become practicable but forces would be liberated which might cope with the social evils of London and with the vast problem of missions to the heathen. So Christian Union is demanded by the conditions of city

life. And the village and city provide parables of the national need. If our country is to be saved, if righteousness is to reign, if truth is to triumph, if love is to lighten all life, the Churches must unite. Patriotism insists on it, and common Christianity.

Christian Union is demanded by the World's Need. And the Edinburgh Conference has emphasised in striking fashion the needs of the whole world anticipated by our Saviour's prayer "That they all may be one . . . that the world may believe," and has moreover demonstrated the possibility and practicability of Christian Union. And after all the Churches exist for world evangelisation and conquest. That is the great commission. That is the primary duty. If you ask what it is that God most wants and what it is the world most needs, and find the answer in Christ's revelation of God's eternal longing for the sons of men, and in His revelation of man's power of spiritual relationship—God's eternal passion and man's eternal need—and realise that the Churches are called to carry on the great business of universal redemption it is obvious that nothing matters quite so much as the most effective use of all our resources in response to the great commission. And when we are told, as we have been recently, by missionary experts, by men on the field, as the result of statesmanlike enquiry and patient sifting of evidence given by all missionary Societies, that without the addition of a single missionary, the co-operation of Christian forces would more than double our effectiveness, we need ask for no more sweeping condemnation of denominational divisions and no more complete recognition of the worker for Church Union as a world evangelist. Oh these divisions! what can Christ think of them all in the light of God's eternal sacrifice and the World's heart-breaking needs? Do they not add age-long agony to His continued intercession "That they all may be one . . . that the World may believe"? The task Christ imposes upon all His disciples is so gigantic and so urgent that all waste of power is wicked. There are a thousand million people waiting to be evangelised and Christianised, a thousand million! waiting with open and plastic natures, in this day of unparalleled opportunity for the character-creating word of grace, and if we, unmindful of the universal redemptive passion of our Lord, obsessed by denominational pride—if we fail Christ and the world in this day, the opportunity will pass, the plastic nature of the wakening world will be set by other forces and Christ will be robbed of His glory and the people of their natural Lord.

Besides it is proven up to the hilt that the world neither needs nor wants our denominational divisions. Christendom has outgrown them, and the non-Christian world happily cannot understand them. The world needs the essential things that all denominations have in common, and only the essential and not the distinctively denominational things can satisfy the world's essential needs. English and American divisions may have some historical value but our common Christianity has a longer and a richer history and a universal and eternal value, and in various parts of the Mission field, enlightened Christian natives are conspiring to answer our Saviour's prayer. By

the great mercy of God many of our denominational names cannot be translated into some languages, and denominational ideas are being obliterated in spite of us. Rev. E. W. Burt, an English Baptist missionary, says "The best and most intelligent Chinese leaders are ahead of the average missionary in desiring one Church of Christ in China." Dr. J. C. Garritt, an American Presbyterian, says "If the missionaries fail to come up to the mark, I believe the Chinese will speak out for Union with no uncertain sound," and Bishop Roots declares "If the missionaries cannot supply this demand for leadership in the practical development of Christian Unity among the Chinese Christians, that leadership will undoubtedly arise outside the ranks of the missionaries and perhaps even outside the ranks of the duly authorised ministers of the Christian Church in China."

+ The fact is that in the Mission Field missionaries have not the free hand that is necessary to build up a purely Christian Church. They are fettered by the denominational societies they represent. They are in bondage to Home Committees, and Home Committees are too often swayed by sectarian rather than by Catholic considerations. Christian abandon to the passion for the Kingdom of God would mean the withdrawal of denominational agents from certain centres. Comity would mean Co-operation, Co-operation would mean Liberation. Delimitation of Territory would mean more land possessed, more men made, more triumphs for truth and more joy for God. Let it be understood that the propagation in foreign lands of denominational prejudices, which we are fast outgrowing here is something to be utterly condemned. Our missionary societies must not be allowed to do in the foreign field what no society would dare do in the Home Land. Missionaries must be free, free to unite, with less reference to Home directors and more abandon to Heaven's purposes revealed in the Sacred Scriptures and written in the Bible of the world's needs. Only the United Church can capture the world for Christ, fulfilling all that is good in other religions, banishing all that is bad, uniting the whole world in the radiant righteousness of the one Eternal God.

The world needs essential Christianity. Essential Christianity unites. The essential thing is what Christ wants. Christ wants Christians to be one that the world may be won. Let no man, no church, no society attempt to divide Christ or put Him to open shame. Let every Christian, every church, every society unite to save the world. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." "He is the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world."

The Demand for Christian Union by the Essence of Christianity

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THE Scriptures speak of the church as a unit, and deprecate and condemn everything in the nature of faction or schism. The thought of unity bulks large in the teaching of our Lord and His apostles. Because of the social and political conditions of their time, the danger of strife and division was very great. On this account the notes of warning ring out clear and strong. I am to speak of the demand for Christian Union by the Essence of Christianity.

The unity of God is a fundamental thought of the Old Testament and of the New. This thought is implied where it is not expressed. "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God is one Jehovah." Through the prophet Isaiah the Lord of Hosts said, "I am the first, and I am the last; and besides Me there is no God." Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth; as there are gods many and lords many; yet to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto Him." Since God is one it follows that His children should be one. They are partakers of the same divine nature; they are actuated by the same motives and labour for the same ends. They constitute one people and are so designated. It would be as unnatural for God to be divided against Himself as for His people to be divided against themselves.

Our Lord said to His disciples, "All ye are brethren." This is one of the names applied to believers in the New Testament. The Psalmist said, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." Unity is a good thing in itself and it is a condition of a greater good, even life for evermore. Our Lord said, "By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another." Love is the hallmark of Christianity. The apostle tells us to put on love, for love is the bond of perfectness.

The central theme of our Lord's teaching was the kingdom. He used many parables to set it forth. Sometimes it is the Kingdom of God and sometimes it is the Kingdom of heaven: but it is one and the same Kingdom however presented and whatever aspect of it is under consideration. He spoke of the church He was about to build and against which the gates of Hades should not prevail. But it was one Church and only one that He proposed to build. We have the same thought under another figure. "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and they shall become one flock, one Shepherd."

Again we hear Him say, "I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit." The branches are many; the vine is one; and branches and vine unite to form one tree. The branches differ in length, in girth, in form; no two are exactly alike; but they are all filled with the same life and all bear the same fruit. The well-being of the branches depended upon their abiding in Christ the true vine. If they did not abide in Him they would be cast forth and would wither and would be cast into the fire and be burned. It should be borne in mind that individual Christians are the branches and not the different denominations, as is sometimes said.

The main thing in the prayer of our Lord which is recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John, is the prayer for the unity of His followers. Four times does He allude to this subject. "Holy Father, keep them in Thy name which thou hast given Me, that they may be one, even as we are." "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on Me through their word; that they may be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me. And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that Thou didst send Me; and lovedst them, even as Thou lovedst Me." The union here contemplated is the closest and most intimate imaginable. Elsewhere He said, "I and the Father are one." Here He wishes His disciples to be one even as He and the Father are one. Human language could add nothing to that. He was standing in the shadow of the cross when He offered this prayer. This fact helps us to understand the place the unity of His followers had in His thought and programme. With this prayer in mind it must be evident that the oneness for which He prayed is pleasing to God, and that division, if it exists at all, exists contrary to His will.

Much space is given in the Epistles to the question of unity. Paul's prayer for the Christians in Rome was that the God of patience and comfort would grant them to be of the same mind one with another, according to Jesus Christ; that with one accord they might with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. To the Corinthians he wrote, "Now I beseech you brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment." He had some intimations that there were contentions among them; some were saying, I am of Paul; others, I am of Apollos; others, I am of Cephas; and others still, I am of Christ.

In the same Epistle the apostle said, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. . . . For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body;

is it therefore not of the body?" The apostle tells us that God hath set the members in the body as it hath pleased Him, and all are necessary to the completeness and efficiency of the body. What the inspired writer is concerned about here is the unity of the Church of Christ. From his point of view strife and division in the church would be as abnormal and as suicidal as strife among the different members of the human body.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians the same apostle speaks to the same effect. He besought the Ephesian Christians to walk worthily of the calling wherewith they were called, and to give diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. He adds, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all." In this one sentence the thought of unity is presented seven times. The repetition is for the sake of emphasis. Seven is the number of perfection; the emphasis here is as perfect as language can make it. All believers make up the church which our Lord has purchased with His own blood. The church is the one body. This body is made up of diverse materials, Jews, Samaritans, Romans, Greeks, and representatives of all other nations and peoples. That idea seems tame and commonplace now, but it was revolutionary then. We hear much said about the brotherhood of all men, about the solidarity of the race, about the parliament of man, and the federation of the world. Because of the prevalence of a true socialism and the spread of democratic ideas we are not shocked when we hear of all humanity forming one community. But it was not so in the first century of our era. Then Jew and Samaritan had no dealings. The Samaritan was not to be trusted till the twenty-fourth generation. The man that gave his bread to a Samaritan was on a level with the man that ate the flesh of swine. Between the Gentiles and the people of the Covenant there was the deadliest enmity.

The one Spirit mentioned is the Holy Spirit by whom all are renewed into the image of their Creator. We are told elsewhere that there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. To one member is given the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge; to another, faith; to another, gifts of healing; to another, miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, discerning of spirits; to another, diverse kinds of tongues; to another, the interpretation of tongues. But all co-operate to one end, the spiritual profit of the body.

There is one hope. For the individual that is the hope of eternal life. For the church that one hope is the realization of the promise of the new heaven and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness. It is the hope of a new social order in which all evil shall be done away for ever.

The one Lord is Jesus the Christ. He is the Saviour of the world and the Teacher of humanity; but He is also Lord of all. It is only as we submit to Him as our Lord that He can save us from the guilt and power of sin. Because He has purchased us with His

own blood, He has a right to reign over us. He is our Sovereign to whom we owe allegiance and obedience. His name is above every name in heaven and on earth. On His head are many diadems; in His hand there is the sceptre of universal dominion. He is the Head of the body, the Church, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

The one faith is faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. By being united to Him, believers are united to one another. The one baptism is a baptism into Christ. That is a committal of the soul with all its interests to Him for time and eternity. We are not baptized into Moses, as were the ancient Hebrews in the cloud and in the sea. And last of all, there is one God and Father of all. He is the source of life and of all the blessings of life. He is through all. He is the one force pervading the universe.

In this same Epistle to the Ephesians we are told that it was the purpose of God in the fulness of times to sum up all things in Christ, the things that are in heaven, and the things that are on earth. That thought was abhorrent to the aristocracy of every kind of that age. They wanted the lines of separation deepened and the barriers made insuperable; on no account did they wish the dividing lines obliterated and the barriers removed. And they were astounded when they learned that Christianity proposed to break down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile and to make of the two one new humanity, and that one of a higher order than either had been or could be alone. Paul told the Ephesians that through Christ both Jews and Greeks had access in one Spirit unto the Father. Here again we have the thought of unity.

There are other figures employed to set forth the thought of unity. The Church is called the household of God; it is called a spiritual house, an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession. The meaning of each figure is plain.

Paul's exhortation to the Philippians is, "Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ; that whether I come and see you or be absent, I may hear of your estate, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one soul striving for the faith of the gospel." He besought them to fulfil his joy, that he might be "of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."

The ordinances in the church symbolize unity and make for unity. "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jew or Greek, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit." Baptism has to do with Christ, but it has to do with the Church also. It is a social institution; it initiates the subject of it into the one body. So we read in the Epistle to the Galatians, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye are all one *man* in Christ Jesus." Here is a marvel if not a miracle of divine grace. What is true of baptism is true of the Lord's Supper also. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? Seeing that we, who are

many, are one bread, one body ; for we all partake of the one bread." Eating together at that time was a sign of brotherhood and a pledge of continued brotherhood.

It would seem that these references to the teaching of the word of God are sufficient to show that the church of Christ as conceived by its Founder is an organism ; it is one and not many. It is a brotherhood, a Kingdom, a flock, a body, a temple, a priesthood, a peculiar people, a holy nation, a family ; whatever the name applied to it the thought of unity is manifestly present.

If any additional proof is needed it can be found in what is said of the man or men who seek to divide the body whose Head is Jesus the Christ. "Mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned ; and turn away from them." "For whereas there is among you strife and jealousy, are ye not carnal, and do ye not walk after the manner of men ? For when one saith, I am of Paul ; and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not men ? What then is Apollos ? and what is Paul ? Ministers through whom ye believed ; and each as the Lord gave him." "A factious man after a first and second admonition refuse ; knowing that such a one is perverted, and sinneth, being self-condemned." Among the works of the flesh are "factions, divisions, parties," and "they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." James says this, "For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace."

Let us now consider some of the effects of the unity contemplated as these effects are set forth in the word of God. One of these is the perfection of the believer. In His intercessory prayer our Lord said, "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected into one." Paul's desire for the Christians in Corinth was that there might be no divisions among them, but that they might be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment. In another connection he said to them, "Be perfected ; be comforted ; be of the same mind ; live in peace ; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." It is in unity that the soul attains completeness. Each member of the body of Christ is made perfect only as he does his proper part in the body.

In the body if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it ; if one is honoured, all rejoice with it. It is so in the Church, and herein is the value of the church. Each member is to exhort the other ; each is to comfort the other ; each is to provoke the other to love and good works. Each is to bear the other's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. If one member has been overtaken in a fault, the others are to restore him in the spirit of meekness.

As long as the Twelve were seeking the best positions in the Kingdom, they made little progress. The Ten were filled with indignation when they heard of the attempt of James and John to

secure the most influential places in the cabinet. Selfishness and anger are not conducive to spiritual growth. Paul wrote the Corinthians that he was afraid he would find among them strife, jealousy, wraths, factions, back-bitings, whisperings, tumults. If any or all these sentiments were entertained and practiced it is easy to see that they could not come to perfection. We are admonished not to bite and devour one another, lest we be consumed one of another. If we are hateful and hating one another, we shall fail of the grace of God and shall pierce ourselves through with many sorrows. On the contrary, if we have the mind of the Master, and seek not to be ministered unto but to minister, we shall grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth, and shall be transformed into the image of him that created us.

“O Shame to men ! devil with devil damned
Firm concord hold ; men only disagree
Of creatures rational, though under hope
Of heavenly grace ; and, God proclaiming peace,
Yet live in hatred, enmity and strife !
As if (which might induce us to accord)
Man had not hellish foes enough besides
That, day by day, for his destruction wait.”

Another effect of unity is the growth of the Church. The various gifts which Christ gave unto men, when He ascended on high and led captivity captive, were designed for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of ministering, for the building up of the body of Christ. It was for this purpose that the apostles, and prophets, and evangelists, and pastors and teachers were provided. Of this body Christ is the Head, and from Him the whole body is fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplies, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. A united Church is in a condition to grow in numbers and in knowledge and in devotion to the will of God.

It was upon a united Church that the Holy Spirit was poured out. That day three thousand were added. The believers continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers. “And day by day, continuing with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favour with all people. And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved.” They lived in the Spirit and walked in the Spirit, and this was the result. There was a continuous revival. A body of believers divided among themselves, and biting and devouring one another, indulging in mutual recriminations, need not expect conversions. The Spirit of God cannot do His work with such agents. It was for this reason that Christian men were urged to stand fast in the faith, with one spirit striving for the faith of the gospel. They were urged not to grieve away the Holy Spirit by which they were sealed unto the day of redemption. Their own growth in knowledge and in grace, no less than the extension of the

Kingdom required this. It goes without saying that the period of the Church's unity was the period of its greatest power and prosperity.

A third effect would be that the world would be convinced that the Father sent the Son. The unity of the disciples of Christ is regarded as influencing the world to knowledge and to faith. In fact, unity amounts to a demonstration. When the world sees many who were its children called out of it, distinguished from it, changed from what they were; washed, justified and sanctified, it will say, "We will go with you, for we see that God is with you." Mathew Henry says, "The unity and harmony of Christians, the beauty of their conduct, as they live and act as brethren in the Lord, will constrain others to believe. When Christianity causes strife to cease, when it cools the fiery, when it smooths the rugged, and disposes men to be kind and loving, courteous and beneficent to all men, studious to preserve and promote peace in all the relations of society; this will recommend it to all who have any natural religion or any natural affection in them." This spiritual life and the unity that is its cause and consequence will make an impression on the world which now rejects Christ and does not believe in His mission. The unity of the various and even contradictory elements in the Church will prove the reality of its divine origin.

A fourth effect would be that the world would be convinced that the Father loved all Christians even as He loved the Son. By keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, they would satisfy the world that they were born of God and that they knew God, and that His loving favour rested on them.

The history of the early church proves this. Those that believed were of one heart and one soul; not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed were his own; but they had all things common. The church had little wealth; there were few persons of learning or rank among its members; Christianity was denounced as a base superstition; its advocates were called atheists and were treated as if they were the filth of the world and the off-scouring of all things. But they were united in Christ and filled with His Spirit and they were irresistible. The might of Rome went down in defeat before them. Gibbon described the progress and conquest of the new faith until it erected its triumphant banner on the ruins of the capitol.

It was as clear as a sunbeam to Christ and His apostles that the energy and the efficiency of the Church would be in proportion to its unity. It is for this reason that so much space is given to this topic by the sacred writers. A house or a kingdom divided against itself could not stand but is brought into desolation. Bishop Hendrix has called attention to the fact that it was the allied armies that won the battle of Blenheim and the battle of Waterloo, which did so much to make Great Britain and to make Britain great. He holds that it is the allied armies that must win the world for our Lord. Longfellow represents the Great Spirit as saying to his children:

"I am weary of your quarrels,
Weary of your prayers for vengeance,
Of your wranglings and dissensions ;
All your strength is in your union,
All your danger is in discord,
Therefore be at peace henceforward,
And as brothers live together."

Captain Mahan has the thought which he presents under a military figure. He says there is a vast difference between the blow of a single large projectile and of several smaller ones of the same aggregate weight—the difference between a shock and an earthquake. The smaller are likely to lack simultaneousness of impact and in concentrated momentum they are certain to fall short of the larger.

The Lord's work is seriously crippled and hindered by division and by the evils that follow division. The Church is broken into three main divisions and into a great number of sub-divisions. The three main divisions are the Catholic, the Greek and the Protestant. England has two hundred and eighty different kinds of Christians ; the United States has nearly as many. Division results in waste and strife and confusion. Men who should be sent to the front are kept at home doing garrison duty. Money that is needed for missions is used to maintain these different denominational establishments. A united Church is needed to evangelize the world ; a united Church is abundantly able to evangelize the world. A divided Church is impotent and helpless, and urges that it has all it can do to support itself. A few decades ago Germany had little influence either at home or abroad. Under the guidance of Bismarck, Germany became one ; we know what has happened since. Germany has become one of the most influential nations in the old world. Not long ago Italy was a mere geographical expression. Then Italy had no voice at the round table of the nations to which any attention was paid. United Italy is quite another matter. A wise proverb says that three men working together will accomplish more than six men working apart. The reconstruction of Christendom on the original and divine basis would increase the power of the Church ten-fold, to say the least.

Because of our unhappy divisions the Church is not as effective as it should be either at home or abroad. Its divisions sap its life and strength. In small towns there are four or five times as many organizations as are needed. The congregations are small and weak in consequence ; the ministers are underpaid, the accommodations are inadequate. Instead of spending all their time in preaching the gospel, the ministers have to explain wherein they differ from their religious neighbours and to justify their separate existence. The results are unsatisfactory and the outlook is discouraging. If all held and spoke the same thing, one man could do what all four or five are doing and do it better. The Church would be strong and could pay a living salary ; the music would be good, and the accommodations would be adequate.

Much good work is being done on the mission fields, but that work would be far more effective if all the workers were perfectly

joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. Because they are not, those to whom they go are sometimes perplexed and do not know what to do. The king of Uganda said, "Every white man seems to have a different religion; how am I to know who is right and who is wrong?" A Brahmin leader said, "When so many churches and sects offer themselves and demand allegiance, India, confounded and vexed, asks, Which is the true Church?" On reaching England the same man said he found himself surrounded by various religious denominations, each offering its own interpretations of the Bible, and its own peculiar belief. He felt as a man in a vast market; he was vexed with the conflicting wares and the quarrelling sects.

The missionaries unite as far as they can. They realize the need of unity as the Christian people at home cannot. They meet to pray and to work for it. They are convinced that a great injury is being done in exporting denominationalism among peoples who have no interest in it and who cannot understand it. They want to present a solid front to the foe. They feel confident that they could take the world for Christ in a generation if they formed one united body. They know that their strength is dissipated by division and that Christ is dishonoured. What they want is not comity or federation but unity in Christ, so that missionaries and converts may with one heart and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In our union services we sing, "We are not divided; all one body we; one in hope and doctrine, one in charity." The sentiment is good, but the statement does not agree with the fact. We are divided; the Church is not a unit as our Lord prayed that it might be. It is cheerfully admitted that there is much spiritual unity, but something more is needed if the world is to be evangelized in the near future.

In the face of the problems that face the Church in our time, it is evident that we should sink all our differences as far as we conscientiously can do so and stand as one man for the faith of the gospel. And not only in the face of these problems but as we stand before God to whom we must give an account of our stewardship should we do this. How else can we hope to successfully attack these problems? Before the battle of Trafalgar, Nelson sent for one of his admirals to come on board his flagship. On his arrival Nelson asked the admiral where his captain was. The admiral said, "We are not on good terms, and I did not ask him to come with me." "Terms!" said Nelson, "not on good terms!" He sent for the captain and said to the two men, "Yonder are the combined fleets of the enemy, shake hands like good Englishmen and be friends." In the face of Buddhism, and Confucianism, and Hinduism, and Mohammedanism, and Agnosticism and Animism, it becomes the followers of Christ to unite and to use all the energies they possess to win the victory.

In the war with France the German States were welded into the German Empire. In the siege of Peking, national and religious lines were forgotten. One of the interesting incidents of the siege

was connected with the international gun. The gun was an English six-pounder. It was mounted on an Austrian carriage, loaded with German powder and Russian shells, and fired by the hand of an American gunner. Had it not been for that united effort, all must have perished and no one would have been left to tell the tale.

The conversion of the race was in the thought of God from the time that the foundations of the earth were laid and all the sons of God shouted for joy. The realization of this purpose waits on the union of the people of God, the unity for which our Lord prayed. Since all admit this to be true, it is plain that all the children of God who are scattered abroad should find some scriptural basis of union and unite. The essence of Christianity demands this; the Founder of Christianity can be satisfied with nothing less than this.

I cannot close better than with some lines from Whittier, America's poet-prophet:

“Forgive, O Lord, our severing ways,
The rival altars that we raise,
The varying tongues that sing Thy praise.

Suffice it now. In time to be
Shall one vast temple rise to Thee,
The Church our broad humanity.

White flowers of love its walls shall climb,
Soft bells of peace shall ring its chime,
Its days shall all be holy time.

The hymn long sought shall then be heard,
The music of the world's accord,
Confessing Christ the risen Lord.

That song shall swell from shore to shore,
One faith, one hope, one love restore
The seamless garment Jesus wore.”

Bases for Christian Union

PREBENDARY WEBB-PEPLOE, M.A.

(Church of England)

WE are met as representatives of an idea, or ideal, which I fear the great majority of so called Christians would consider neither less, nor more, than a castle in the air, without foundation and without any hope whatever of stability. But there are better thoughts in some minds, and I am thankful to see so many as there are present to-night, gathered under the guidance of God the Holy Spirit, with one aspiration, and with a conviction that there is to come in the days beyond us, a glorious linking of the people of God; and the question is, in what way we shall expect that linking.

First of all, the unity of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is His body, which must be taken as an existent fact, is neither more nor less than a synonym for the life that exists in the body. Of course it is the Church, and without that none of us would be really Christians at all; and if it be true, as we know it must be, because it appears so in the Epistles, that the Church is one body, only one absolutely, one of which He is the Head, then one life pervades that body and there must be vital unity already between all who are called to be members of the Church, the great Church of Christ, that is all who are linked to Him by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Secondly. There is another attempt in the present day or another aspiration, and that is to emphasize the invisible yet vital union which exists in all who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ by the coming together of those who are distinguished popularly by the titles of "Churches," until they shall discover not only that there is a vital unity between them already (because they have the life of Christ pervading them all) but that there might be a co-operation which shall be entitled "Union," for certain purposes or objects, until it shall be hardly distinguishable whether there be any difference between one and another. Yet there must remain that difference which exists in the body, because every one knows that there is a distinction between hand and foot, and so the Apostle has been led to say that the foot cannot say: "Because I am not the hand, etc." They serve for different purposes and ends, but they are portions of the same body, instinct with the same life, and the only question is how far can there be union in action, as well as in purpose and desire, on the part of different members of the body of Christ.

Thirdly. There is a third idea which is sometimes put forward and mistaken for union, namely "uniformity." I do not believe that uniformity can be possible any more than the hand can be exactly the same as the foot, or the arm as the leg. They are distinct members of the one great body, and uniformity was evidently not the purpose of the Maker; but unity is a fact, union is a hope, uniformity

I put away until we attain to the glory which is to come. But that uniformity, being dismissed for the present, is not to be an aspiration and prayer is of course a mistake. The nearer we come towards each other the greater will be the realization of uniformity in action, and representation to the world of the mind, as well as the character and life of Christ.

But union, if I understand it rightly, is the thought and hope of our day and it is very important and helpful to realise that true union can only be achieved when there is unity, in three different aspects. (1.) Unity first of all which exists already *mentally*. That unity we ought all of us to realize. We think of the unity of the body of Christ every time we utter the word, and therefore there is already existing mental unity. (2.) Then, necessarily there must be "*moral* unity." When we begin to be united in action, and in that way realize union in different parts of the body whereby it may fulfill the high purposes and intentions of God. (3.) Then that which may be described as "*mechanical*," when absolutely we are made one as we shall be in glory, and that will answer to uniformity. But that, I have put aside altogether in my own generation, and in all the generations of men, until the Lord Himself return.

Accepting then the fact of unity as a representation, or term, for the life of Christ in all believers, we ask ourselves to-day what are the Bases, and Possibilities, presented to us of union. Bases, as being the starting points, from which the Possibilities will arise. I do not think that this subject has been duly considered. I am doubtful whether due attention has been given to the existing starting points on which union appears to some to be possible. I do not know whether I am representing the intention of the promoters of our syllabus. That is my idea. I look back to the source from whence the body commences. I remember the prayer of my Lord that "they may all be one." I remember the words of St. Paul in Gal. 3, 28, and I see that he had not only an aspiration of hope for the future but that in the true body of Christ "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." It is a very striking fact that when St. Paul wanted to express the magnificent power of the Gospel he says in the 16th verse that "the promise of God was not,—to seeds, as of many, but as of one, and to thy seed which is Christ." Now the Christ, and the Christ is the grand term which I delight to dwell upon, is the basis and the sole basis of possible union. He is the absolute source of life and therefore as His life pervades all the members of the body, which constitute His Church, the great living Church upon earth as well as in Heaven, there ought to be unquestionably the realization of a basis for union, because we start there, being members of the body of Christ Himself, the seed in Whom all the blessings of God are found centred and from Whom all possibilities spring for us. The Basis which is given there in that word "Christ" is very strikingly brought out by St. Paul, as the personality of Him, who coming from God, was to exhibit the *Godhead* in all its perfections and to manifest the manhood in

His life upon earth and then to combine the two in His own self and through His Spirit, to bring out its beauty and power, in the men that should be linked to Him by faith. How St. Paul dwells upon the Christ I need hardly say. Take one single Epistle and in the four chapters of the Epistle to the Philippians he mentions the word "Christ" alone 18 times, "Jesus Christ" 20 times, and mentions again and again "in the Lord" as the position of believers manifesting there, as a specimen of his writing, what he considers to be the blessing of all true believers, and summing up his own aspirations in the 3rd Chap., 13th verse, "But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." "This one thing," as if one thing absorbed his whole soul and that one thing is Christ, and the Christ of God is so before him that he says "To me to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Chap. I, 21). He can say also "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," (Chap. 4, 13) and, again and again, in that one Epistle, taking it as a specimen, he exhibits before the minds of his readers this forceful idea, that all is centred in the person of Christ; and that no man realizes the Christian privileges at all, who has not got his whole soul and his aspirations, and desires, and prospects, of the future, centred in the person of Christ, so that he can say, "Christ is all and in all to me," (Col. 3, 11). I believe that until we apprehend the Christ as the whole that is required for our blessing, we are apt to make the Church to be the centre of power, of blessing, or hope of union. There are those on the other hand who make the priesthood to be the centre of everything. The moment that a man leans upon, or looks toward, or has his aspirations in, anything but the Christ, I see no hope of any real union; and only those who take Christ as being the centre of everything that is connected with human exaltation and human salvation, can hope for real revelation of unity in union. ✓

Consequently it seems to me that the only Basis of union is this, that men should accept the perfect atonement made by the Lord Jesus Christ for sin,—and the perfect gift of life as displayed in Christ and committed to those who accept Him. The perfect admission to God for fellowship, and union is, as St. John says, 1. John I. 3, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ," only found in partaking of Christ's own life. This is a necessary basis again when we realise the privilege of access to God (see Ephesians 2, 18), "That through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father," and further it is needful that we recognise this as a starting point of all possible co-operation, which can lead to perfect union.

Again the fact that we are members one of another and that the body is one and that every one is a member in particular (1. Cor. 12), makes it necessary for the body to learn to carry on its vitality and its engagements, by the realisation of unity in Christ Jesus the Lord.

What is it but a divinely implanted instinct that causes the lid to close on the eye the moment there is a danger of intrusion on the ocular power, or the hand to be raised to defend the body when danger approaches? It is the power of the inner life, and it is this inner life of the Christ of God that gives to us as His members the possibilities of co-operating, until we are absolutely prompted not only not to injure each other, but prompted to do everything to assist each other, even as the members of the natural body do.

Now let us ask ourselves, is there any hope of this being brought to pass, when we remember "our unhappy divisions"? Some of us have seen this beautiful principle in action in the spiritual conventions held in this country. Surely one who has for 35 years been at the Keswick Convention may testify how splendidly this principle of unity, that exists in the body of Christ, can display itself in union, where men forget their distinctions, and differences, and divisions, and come together as "All one in Christ Jesus." Across our two great tents there, there are placed red coloured mottoes to this effect, "All one in Christ Jesus." I know no place, (except it may be Northfield in America), where you will see, as you do at Keswick, this wonderful unity of spirit pervading the body of Christ and its different members. Our so called distinctions or divergences are absolutely forgotten, and we do not know, or even remember to ask, who, or what, Mr. So and So is, but we are all one in Christ Jesus, in the truest sense of the word. There is however coming soon we believe, a wider exhibition of the possibility of union; and, as your chairman has said, we have seen a marvellous illustration of the hope, and intention of some acknowledgment, of this unity and union in the great Edinburgh Conference which was held upon missionary grounds. I was there for eight days and watched the whole process carefully; and was delighted to see, how in every branch of the Christian Church, where Christ was taken as the centre, and other things were laid aside, there was a literal possibility and enjoyment of union, for the great, magnificent end of making known "the unsearchable riches of Christ." We had but one idea pervading that great gathering; and while you heard an address from a so-called Churchman, and another address from a member perhaps of some denomination that would at one time have been considered a body of outcasts from the Church, both spoke side by side, both engaged in prayer, both shook hands as though they loved each other, without a thought of divergence or bitterness. It showed, to a grand extent the possibility of union.

We look out into the mission field, and we ask ourselves what is the character there of churches as distinguished one from another in this land, and the blessed declaration is this, that these divergences are almost entirely forgotten. We hear a Bishop say that the last service he took in India, although he was a Bishop, he took in the Baptist Chapel; and actually conducted the service without even a prayer book in front of him. That is the influence of Unity in India; and if we carry our thoughts still further, we find that the the young Christians of the day who are now rising up in such

numbers in China, Japan, Korea, and elsewhere, are all of them aspiring after union; recognising the unity of spirit, they are desirous of union; and are taking steps towards it; and, though they have got no further yet than federation, there is an aspiration towards a union which will not be uniformity necessarily, but will be union of the members of the different Churches. I will just give you from the Missionary Report No. 8, which was brought before the Conference, the terms of federation agreed upon in certain Churches in the East. You hear these words of the Chinaman, "Agreed that the Churches should federate upon the following terms. To encourage everything that will demonstrate the existing essential unity of Christendom. To watch for opportunities of united prayer and mutual conference between representatives of different bodies of Christians in China, and, as opportunity offers, to initiate and arrange for representative meetings for the furtherance of unity. To recommend plans whereby the whole field can be worked most efficiently, and with the greatest economy in men, and time, and money. To promote union in educational work. The consideration of all questions as to how the various phases of Christian work can be carried on most efficiently, for example, translation and literary work, social work, medical work and evangelisation; and in general to endeavour to secure harmonious co-operation, and more effective work throughout the whole Empire." Thus far Union is already an accomplished fact in China. In India they have gone so far as to say that they can correspond and federate, but do not yet see the possibility of direct and absolute union so as to constitute one great Church. Possibly the whole Church is not ripe for that, but it is an aspiration, it is a hope, it is a yearning. This was expressed in prayer by many at Edinburgh; and you saw the highest Churchmen, side by side with men of every denomination that can name the name of Christ as the centre and power of their life, and this one idea pervading us all: How can we get closer one to another?

And the only danger is this, that we may spoil the possibilities of union by talking of it too much. I well remember a departed Christian saying to me, "Listen, my young brother; to talk of these things is rather like (it was in the day when photography was not so advanced) taking a sensitized plate in your hand, and roughly touching and handling it; you spoil its sensitiveness and ruin the plate. Take care that you do not talk too much, but use your plate." We must take care that we do not talk too much, after this Conference is over, about the matter of union, and the differences that prevent union. We have just agreed that we cannot improve upon this one basis of Christ, none but Christ, the basis. The one and only basis that exists for unity is Christ, and the only hope for union, is that we draw nearer and nearer to Him, always thinking of Him as the centre of life, as the power and privilege of blessing for men here, and the glorious hope for the time to come. And I do affirm from personal experience, whether in America or England, that so far as we forget our differences and simply realize that we are all one in Christ Jesus, the differences do not appear. I am quite

aware that there must be distinctions in the matter of uniformity, as to whether you will baptize an infant or not, whether there shall be a formal service or not, whether an Episcopal government or not. These are points of difference that prevent the hope of uniformity yet, but we can draw nearer to each other year by year, and without speaking too much of it, carry out the matter by action, rather than by word. Let us go hand in hand, heart to heart, word by word, simply putting forward Him whom to know is Life eternal and the joy of every true believer. My one idea in asking you to realize the true bases of unity is this: Take Christ as being all and in all, from this time forth and for evermore; and you will very soon learn to love *all* who love Him! Then will go up the earnest cry of St. Paul, "Grace be with *all them* that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity" (Eph. 6, 24).

Bases for Christian Union

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PROF. Wm. Ralph Inge said in the January (1910) number of the Hibbert Journal: "The universal Church is a pleasant dream, like the universal State. When the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World, holds its first sittings, it will be time to draw up a constitution for the true Catholic Church."

And yet we are met here in the interest of a universal Church. Those of us who are here with seriousness of purpose to discuss Christian union, come confessing the ancient faith of the Church: "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints." Our coming may testify that we know only how to dream dreams, and see visions; but it must be admitted that it is a dream that was born first of all in the Heart of Jesus, and the apostle to the Gentiles, and a vision that has inspired the noblest ambitions of the Church in all ages. We are not as those who have no hope, but truth obliges us to confess that with reference to the times and seasons of the unity of Christendom, knowledge fails us; of that day and hour knoweth no man, but the Father only. Of this one thing are we certain, that we ought to pray and not to faint.

[The speaker then gave a survey of the irenic efforts, proposals and bases of union of the Church, during the various periods of her history].

There were many individual peace-makers in both the Protestant and Roman Churches, whose proposals never received formulation in the official councils and practices of the Church. Among the most zealous workers for union were Melancthon who went far in his concessions to the Roman Church, and on the side of the Catholics, were George Cassander and George Witzel. Cassander's plan was "to bring the doctrines of the Church to their original simplicity, as the condition of union." He "conceded that the Scriptures were the only authority for proving any doctrine." Wicelius "clung firmly to the hope that by following the path which Erasmus had pursued, renouncing all scholastic subtleties and papal abuses, by purifying the Church and returning to the Scriptures, all Christendom might once more become united around its common Lord Christ."

George Calixtus stands out as one of the most conspicuous peace-makers of the seventeenth century. He adopted the view of the peace-makers of his time "that the essential doctrines of Christianity were held by all the Churches." "Following essentially in the steps of Cassander, he developed his peace making theology into the position, that the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, sufficient for salvation, were contained in the Apostles' Creed, and in the common faith, explanatory hereof, of the first five centuries,

and that the Churches which acknowledged this and viewed the additional tenets of the particular Churches as non-essential, should at once come into peaceful relations and thus pave the way for a future union of the Churches."

Many other voices were raised for Christian union in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, all to the same effect, that a basis of union should provide for a dogmatic uniformity.

Passing by other programmes of union which would add no new principle to the movement for union, let me speak of two movements, originating in the nineteenth century.

And first merely to mention the proposal of the House of Bishops of the American Episcopal Church, and the Lambeth Conference of the English Church, embodied in the "Declaration concerning Unity" of 1886-1888. Since a representative of this Church is here to speak, I will not assume to interpret or characterize this plan.

It is expected, however, that I shall set forth in some fulness, the plan of another movement,—that inaugurated by Thomas Campbell, which has resulted in the formation of one of the five or six largest religious bodies in America. Just one hundred years ago Thomas Campbell sent forth an appeal into the religious society of America, pointing out the evils, weaknesses and miseries of a divided Church, and proposing a way to union. His plan was embodied in what was called a "Declaration and Address." His plan and principles were as follows :

1. All Christians ought to receive one another to visible Church fellowship ; thus only can there be the unity for which Christ prayed.

2. They ought to receive one another on the same terms and conditions.

3. Those terms and conditions can be none other than those on which Christ and the Apostles received persons into discipleship and fellowship in the first century.

4. They consisted of a public profession of faith in Jesus, and a promise of obedience to Him in all things.

The *Declaration and Address* does not go further than these general statements in a definition of the terms of fellowship. In his own words, Thomas Campbell said :

"A manifest attachment to our Lord Jesus Christ in faith, holiness and charity, was the original criterion of Christian character, the distinguishing badge of our holy profession, the foundation and cement of Christian unity."

And again : "All that is necessary to the highest state of perfection and purity of the Church upon earth is, first, that none be received as members but such as having that due measure of Scripture self-knowledge, do profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to Him in all things according to the Scriptures ; nor, secondly, that any be retained in her communion longer than they continue to manifest the reality of their profession by their temper and conduct."

It was a unity in such an initiatory, formal profession that Thomas Campbell had in mind ; such a profession as implied no hard and fast doctrinal content whatever, but had reference solely

to its consequent expression in a life of holiness and charity. He said: "That, although inferences and deductions from Scripture premises, when fairly inferred, may be truly called the doctrine of God's whole Word, yet they are not formally binding upon the consciences of Christians farther than they perceive the connection, and evidently see that they are so; for their faith must not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power and veracity of God. Therefore no such deductions can be made terms of communion, but do properly belong to the after and progressive edification of the Church. Hence it is evident that no such deductions or inferential truths ought to have any place in the Church's confession."

Thomas Campbell, in the *Declaration and Address*, definitely and deliberately expurgated every doctrinal element from the initiatory Christian confession. He said: "As it is not necessary that persons should have a particular knowledge of all Divinely revealed truths in order to entitle them to a place in the Church, neither should they, for this purpose be required to make a profession more extensive than their knowledge; but that, on the contrary, their having a due measure of Scriptural self-knowledge, respecting their lost and perishing condition by nature and practice, and of the way of salvation through Jesus Christ, accompanied with a profession of their faith in and obedience to Him in all things, according to His Word, is all that is absolutely necessary to qualify them for admission into His Church." "That all that are enabled through grace to make such a profession, and to manifest the reality of it in their tempers and conduct, should consider each other as the precious saints of God, and should love each other as brethren."

In defining the nature of the unity he says: "Does not the visible Scriptural unity of the Christian Church consist in the unity of her public profession and practice, and, under this, in the manifest charity of her members, one toward another, and not in the unity of private opinion and practice of every individual?" "We are speaking of the unity of the Church considered as a great, visible, professing body."

In his plan there was a *formal* and a *real* element, a *profession*, and a *practice*, a *faith* and a *life*. But the faith proved its correctness, not by the orthodoxy of its doctrinal content, but by the life that grew out of it.

This basis of union should be described as a biblico-professional uniformity. Unity was to consist not in the same doctrines, or the same creed, or ceremony or order, but in the same initial profession, derived from the practice of the primitive apostolic Churches. Its principle of authority was the New Testament; its principle of unity—agreement in the profession and practice of things biblically essential to salvation.

Thomas Campbell believed that this was a consensus which already existed among Protestant denominations, and was all the more practicable as a basis of union in that it meant the surrender of nothing essential on the part of any denomination. He did, however, anticipate that the adoption of the New Testament as the

only rule of faith and practice, would finally reduce all the denominational systems to a uniformity of custom. He did not object to the various creeds and customs of the Churches so long as they were held to be what they really were, human inventions, and were treated as such, but not bound upon the consciences of believers as tests of fellowship.

He was concerned merely to see the adoption of one test of fellowship by all the Churches, (and that a divinely authorized, New Testament test) which provided for a uniform interchange of membership among all denominations. A Christian would then universally pass as a Christian when he really was one according to the universally approved criterion of Christian discipleship—the teaching and practice of Christ and His Apostles. What could be more reasonable or fair for a religious society that already bowed to the sole and supreme authority of the New Testament, in theory at least. It was a self-evident solution of the problem of union, to the mind of its author.

This plan of union, left undefined by Thomas Campbell in the *Declaration and Address*, did not long remain so. The company that adopted this programme, started as a society for the promotion of Christian Union among all Churches, but was soon transformed into a Church. It fell to the lot of Alexander Campbell, the son of Thomas, to define more fully and systematically the content of the primitive profession and practice, in application to Christian fellowship in the first Church organization. He soon came to the conclusion that the rite of Baptism was performed by immersion in the primitive Church, and since he and his company had decided to make the New Testament a rule of faith and practice, they were all immersed, with but few exceptions. Each Church in turn organized by them or their followers adopted the same custom. There are now, in the year 1910, about twelve thousand Churches in America practicing the rite of immersion as a condition of Church membership. This has grown up a ceremonial uniformity, in addition to the professional and ethical uniformity proposed by Thomas Campbell in the *Declaration and Address*.

The formal profession of faith in Jesus, left undefined by Thomas Campbell in the *Declaration and Address*, was later to be defined in the direction of an orthodox trinitarianism without its metaphysical phraseology. It now consists of a confession of faith in Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of the living God, after the form of the Petrine confession. Thus a doctrinal uniformity has also grown up.

The present conditions of membership practiced by the Disciples of Christ, the followers of Thomas Campbell are—

- (1) A confession of faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God.
- (2) An immersion in water.
- (3) Implying a pledge of a life like that of Christ.

In the rest of this paper, I desire to make a statement of the problem of Christian union as it appears to me personally, in the light of New Testament teaching and the whole history of Christian consensus and dissensus, without reference to any particular basis

that has been proposed. So long as the problem remains unsolved there is need of a constant revision of our premises. We must be free in our approaches to the problem, or we shall make no progress in our solution of it.

The problem of union is not a single problem but many problems wrapped together.

There is a doctrinal problem involved in it, of course, but there is also a social and a historical problem. The least of all our difficulties is the doctrinal problem. Any group of representative men, from the various religious bodies, if given absolute freedom, could easily agree upon a doctrinal basis of union. Thomas Campbell declared one hundred years ago: "It is to us a pleasing consideration that all Churches of Christ which mutually acknowledge each other as such, are not only agreed in the great doctrine of faith and holiness, but are also materially agreed as to the positive ordinances of the Gospel institution."

We often see two denominations, such as the Baptists and Disciples of America, standing rigidly apart, when practically the only difference that separates them is the different names they wear. What keeps them apart? Historic conditions, ancestral inheritances, denominational pride, religious clannishness, and the vast, sodden, reasonless inertia that overtakes religious bodies as they grow older and larger and more respectable. No denomination is a free, plastic organism, after the early stages of its development. It crystallizes into a fixed ecclesiastical system, and hardens into a rigid social caste. Its guidance and direction are not even conscious, rational, and deliberative but instinctive, blind and emotional. The increasing mass that composes it is socially and traditionally controlled; and the leaders who ought to be free and deliberative, are themselves controlled by the instinctive or class fears and faiths of the mass. Agreement with the mass is the price the leader pays for his leadership.

What can one or a few men do against the doctrinal fixedness, the social clannishness, and the instinctive conservatism of a denomination, to change any part of its system or its direction, to bring it into union with other denominations? They can do something, but not much. We have grown into our divisions and sects and must grow out of them. The process is socially controlled. Conferences like this can accelerate the process, other forces can retard it, but neither the one nor the other can stay it. There is a power, not ourselves, that is making for unity. Unity is the last and highest expression of the social organism, but it is implicit within it from the beginning. Individuality is first nature, sociality, is second nature, and grows out of the social experience of the individual. "All vital unity," says Prof. Cooley, "is one not of agreement, (that is of contract or conventional compact) but of organization, of interaction and mutual influence."

Here let me avail myself of a chapter in a forth-coming publication by Prof. Edward Scribner Ames, a colleague of mine in the University of Chicago, on "The Psychology of Religious Sects."

He says: "The different religious bodies are in effect so many social clans. Their loyalties, antipathies, and methods are based upon race and class inheritances and prejudices, merged with the fine idealism of the central Christian faith. Under the influences of modern life these clans feel drawn together for mutual defence, but they are suspicious and awkward in actual attempts at union. While theoretically admitting that the things in which they agree are more numerous than those in which they differ, yet they continue under the influences of deep-seated instincts and habits to magnify incidental differences. They are under the control of the ancient biological, primitive clan impulse to preserve the identity and integrity of the organism."

Clannishness is not a mistake for the clan; it is its life. But it is the peril of the empire. The Church has passed beyond the tribal period. Imperial impluses were born in her at the beginning, and have all along struggled for expression; but the fulness of her imperial time had not come. Medieval Catholicism was born out of due time. It was still the tribal age of Western Society. The nations had first of all to be born and come to maturity. There is now a feeling of the brotherhood of nations; no nation lives unto itself. But this could not be until discovery and invention in the arts of communication had brought the nations next door to each other. New York is closer to London to-day than Edinburgh was three centuries ago; and America and Japan are closer to-day than England and Scotland one hundred years ago. This neighbourhood of nations is preparing the way for a parliament of man, a federation of the world. You cannot have the nation before the tribe has run its course, nor the empire before the nation has run its course. Prof. Inge is right: "When the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World, holds its first sittings, it will be time to draw up a constitution for the true Catholic Church." Social and religious progress are inseparable. What we need at the present time more than anything else, is not a basis, but a programme of union; for we have to do with a process which is neither so simple, nor so hopeless a matter as the striking out of a doctrinal basis of agreement. "No stable unity can be effected," says the Rev. A. L. Lilley, "but by the slow self-revelation of irresistible truth, whose forward march, like that of a glacier, none can withstand."

And yet we should be able, after nineteen centuries of experience to forecast some of the general features of a basis of union.

1. It must provide for a rich and varied diversity of belief, ritual, and organization.

This is not prophecy but history. It must do so if it is to include everyone in all the history of the Church who has been proud to wear the Christian name, and who has honestly tried to live the Christian life. All such have not been included in the one Church that has borne the name Catholic. As Dr. Smyth has said: "No denomination need be asked to forsake utterly its own rich inheritance from the past, as it may seek with all the saints to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. All the churches should be invited

to bring with them their ancestral treasures into the one household of faith; and they should find space to hang the portraits of their most honoured fathers and teachers among those of other consecrated servants of God, on the walls of the refectory where all they who are called Christian may again break bread together "with gladness and in singleness of heart."

Diversity and Variation will not diminish among Christians, but will rather increase with the growing unity of Christendom. "It is a simple and recognized principle of developement," say Prof. Cooley, "that an enlarged life in the organism commonly involves greater differentiation in its parts." The lower the type of organism, the fewer will be its parts and organs. If anyone desires unity without variety, he can have it, but it will be the unity of the tribe, or the jelly-fish, or the telegraph pole. Nature in her wildness abhors sameness, as she abhors a vacuum. Our divisions are not sheer depravities, though their maintenance beyond a certain point becomes depravity. They are nature's protest not against unity, but against uniformity. The only unity ever attempted in the Church on a universal scale, was a uniformity, and it failed.

2. It must also provide for a continuous progress of Christian thought and life.

Sectarianism is often but another name for resistance to progress. This is the fundamental law of denominationalism—the consecration of the old and customary as the divine and inviolable, and the interdiction of everything new and untried. A new sect has been raised up every time the world grew out of its old ideas and life into a new age. The old religious orders were not able to respond to the new life, and its new needs; attempting to think the new thoughts, and satisfy the new needs in the old order, the men of the new age were thrown out. They went alone and founded a new order which repeated the process in its turn. This process of division or segmentation will go on in the Church just as long as there is growth and progress, with no religious order free enough, plastic enough, or progressive enough, to accommodate all who believe in Jesus Christ, and want to live His life and do His work under the varying conditions and forms suited to each generation.

Progress is bound to go on, either inside or outside the united Church, and the moment the united Church refuses to include all legitimate progress, that moment it has vacated its right to be called a Universal Church.

Provision for progress in the Church of the future is not different from provision for diversity in the present. The one is contemporaneous difference, the other is continuous differentiation. A present unity in diversity could be easily wrecked in a progressive age. If we construct a basis of union for the adjustment of present differences, it must also provide for all future differences that are bound to arise through growth. It must be an organ capable of continuous adjustment to ever changing needs and conditions and temperaments. It will be a marvellous creation, so all-embracing and impartial. Something like nature herself, or providence, or the

Divine affection, or like the Kingdom of God which is likened to a net, so indiscriminating that it gathered of every kind. Certainly the Church cannot make any mistake by being as inclusive as the Kingdom of Heaven.

Our Christian divisions have not been essential differences, but incidental; the various differences for which the various sects have stood, have not been differences that changed the identity of the Christian reality. Christianity as an entity has survived under its various names—Greek and Roman, Protestant and Catholic, Baptist and Pedobaptist. It has remained the same, though it has become something new from age to age. [The speaker here discussed the various answers that are given as to the source and substance of this something that has remained the same, and yet become something new from age to age. As to the source there was some truth in each answer—the Scriptures, Christian scholarship, Christian experience and the soul that is naturally Christian].

The final interpretation of Christianity lies neither in the past nor present, but in the future "Christianity toward which the progressive enlightenment of Christian civilization is bearing us, ever more true to the mind of Christ in every succeeding generation, as the spirit of the ever-living Christ, reborn more perfectly in each generation is giving us to understand it." The whole of Christian history and experience, even our sectarianism, has been teaching us and has been preparing the mind of the Church for a final synthesis, whose separate elements show a marvellous convergence in our modern Christian thought.

This is my conclusion. The basis of a united Church can contain nothing but that which is essential, as it appears in the historic consensus of Christendom.

In other words, the Church can declare no unity which does not already exist, and none can be effected which has not grown up in the historic process. Such a unity will belong to the Church by nature and not by legal convention; and I have no confidence in any other. It is reasonable to suppose that unity will appear in the future where it has been found to appear in the past. The essential will be found to be identical with the historically *universal*,—with that which has been held as Christian "always, everywhere, and by all Christians." If we classify as incidental and non-essential, that which each Christian party has denied to be essentially Christian, and classify as essential that which all have agreed to affirm as essential, we shall arrive at the universal. Only such can become part of an enduring unity.

It does not mean that incidentals and non-essentials shall be excluded and prescribed, but that they shall be held as secondary; permissible under the principle of liberty, but neither required nor prohibited. A true principle of comprehension will make room for all the variations of Christendom, for both its consensus, and dissensus, for its orthodoxy and its heterodoxy, for Episcopacy, Presbytery and Independency, for the sprinkled and the immersed, for trinitarianism and unitarianism, but none of these things will be

treated as essential and inviolable. In non-essentials there will be liberty. The Episcopalian who believes Episcopacy to be the will of God will have his episcopal ordination, but he will not hold it as essential to Christianity, or make it an occasion for separating himself from other orders, for he will recognize that there has been a true expression and survival of Christianity under Presbytery and Independency. As Newman Smyth has said: "If we could suppose that to-day by some visitation like that which fell upon the first born in Egypt, all ecclesiastical orders should perish together, bishops, presbyters, priests—and the Pope himself should be dead with none left for his successor; the Gospel would not perish from the earth; the Church would not be buried in the sepulchre of its ministry."

Dr. Smyth quotes the Bishop of Carlisle to the same effect, who says: "However dearly we prize the historic succession of the episcopate, can we reasonably maintain that it is indispensable to the validity of the word and sacraments?"

It goes without saying that no denomination ever has or ever will achieve the doctrinal, or ceremonial, or ordinal conquest of all others. There must therefore be room in the one organic Church, as there is now in the Spiritual Church, for every denominational peculiarity, consistent with the preservation of its life. Christian unity need not imply that all worship together, any more than that all think together. There can be different forms of worship, in different places of worship, or in the same place at a different hour, to accommodate those who receive more good from one kind of worship than another. Each shall please his neighbour for that which is good, unto edifying.

But to come one step closer to our problem, what is this essential, universal basis of union, toward which Christian scholarship and experience, the Scriptures and the soul that is naturally Christian have been guiding us?

All Christians agree that we cannot have Christianity without Christ; much less Christian union without Him. He is the one quantity that remains as a common denominator in our process of reducing Christianity to its lowest terms. No one has ever tried to have a Christian creed by leaving Him out. He is the common bond of Christendom. We disagree about everything else, but not about the excellence and leadership of Jesus. I do not say that we all agree in our interpretation of Christ, but that we agree in our holding to Him. Even within denominational lines, where there is the same profession of Christ, there is not the same apprehension or realization of Him.

In the light of all our historic unities and universalities, and in the light of present Christian thought and experience, I should say then, that this will enter into any basis of Christian union, in the present or future—the *profession of the name of Christ*.

But the Christian profession is not merely formal, but real, and the reality is the practice of what Christ was in His life and spirit. And here again all Christians have agreed and continue to agree.

The profession of Christ means something vitally; in one word, it means *the practice of a life of brotherly-love*.

Thus I find myself returning by an independent path to the position of Thomas Campbell in the *Declaration and Address*. Here, then, I leave the basis of fellowship for a united church; the profession of the Christian name and relation, and the practice of the Christian life of love. Everything else has been denied by Christians to be Christian; these never have. With them Christianity can survive; with them it can triumph; with them alone it would have triumphed generations ago and the Kingdom of God would now be come. The one suffices to create the visible society; the other suffices to preserve and propagate it. This is the essence, the distinguishing mark, of Christianity; it is likewise the consensus of Christendom. Nothing else is or can be.

Here is unity. As Mornay Williams recently said: "A creed may be true and yet divide; a ritual may be holy and beautiful and yet separate; love alone unites." Love makes all things non-essential but itself.

Contributions toward Unity

REV. W. L. WATKINSON, D.D., LL.D.
(Wesleyan)

IT has been shrewdly remarked that Unity is like Silence; if you speak, it is broken!

We all desire Unity, but if we attempt to define or to secure it, it is at once broken by a variety of opinions—it may be, convictions.

The formal, mechanical unity of the Universal Church, is nowhere in sight of what we call practical politics.

The very condition of life and progress in all directions—in religion as much as in any other—is freedom of thought, and variety of thought, and any attempt to imprison the Universal Church within hard and fast doctrinal or ecclesiastical lines, is doomed to failure.

In the past it was thought that there was something amounting to sacredness about form; the organisation of the various plants and creatures was supposed to be fixed and inveterate. But modern science holds that all creatures are plastic, capable of modification, and that they are being continually modified with a view to their survival, efficiency and happiness.

So we believe that Christ has impressed no one fixed and inveterate form on His Church, but that, for the sake of its continuance and prevalence, He has left it elastic and free to suit many widely different peoples and environments.

The organisation of the Church is ever being subordinated to its mission. In our Lord's prayer for the success of His disciples, the variety that was destined to exist among them seems equally suggested,—“Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on Me through their word; that they may all be one, even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us,” at once declaring the unity of the Father and the Son, and yet implying distinction—“Even as.”

So the unity of Christ's Church implies distinction. We may see the sovereign will and purpose of Christ in the differentiations of His Church, so that the various doctrines of our holy faith may be brought home to men of all nations, climates and types. We distinctly see “the variegated wisdom of God” in the variations of His Church, and nothing can be more quixotic than to seek to bring the whole Christian world to accept the doctrines, system and government of any one Church whatsoever.

The ideal unity is that of Pentecost,—“And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul.” We may differ in the interpretation of doctrine, in modes of worship, in forms of government, and yet be one in faith, love and service. The enlightened Christian has preferences, but no exclusions. “If thine heart be as mine, give me thy hand.”

In speaking of the way in which Christian Unity will be brought about, we are of opinion that it will result much rather from indirect influences than from direct diplomacy and action. This indirect action is the method of the Sovereign Spirit, and thus, we are persuaded, will the desired result be chiefly brought about.

The prominence given of late years to the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, has tended in the direction of reconciling us to each other; of course, this doctrine has always been held by us, but never so distinctly, conspicuously and joyfully as now. This, to some, may seem as if starting a long way off, but the influences that finally prevail, do start a long way off. We cannot repeatedly and vividly bow our knees "unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named," without it telling on the sense of our unanimity. The brotherhood of the godly follows from the Fatherhood of God, and the marked recognition of the latter doctrine must silently but inevitably create a sense of solidarity among devout people.

The extraordinary degree to which the person and teaching of our Lord have been brought forth in the modern Church, has directly tended to develop the sentiment of unity. For generations the mind of the Church was concentrated on doctrinal questions; the validity of the creeds was the absorbing moot point; and the influence of these theological studies was to accentuate the differences which exist among us. This generation has largely gone back to Christ and to the simplicity that is in Him. In our life-time the personality of Christ has wonderfully grown on the consciousness of Christendom, and anything like a bitter divisive spirit is impossible in the presence of the Master and in His more intimate fellowship.

We see this brought out in the instance recorded in the Gospel: "And they came to Capernaum; and when He was in the house, He asked them 'What were ye reasoning in the way?' but they held their peace; for they had disputed one with another in the way who was the greatest." They were ashamed to revive their debate in the presence of the Lord. The whole spirit of the controversy was so contrary to the spirit of Christ; in His presence it appeared so mean and impossible. And to-day, the more clearly we know our Lord, the more familiar we are with His teachings; the more deeply we drink in His spirit, the nearer shall we be brought together.

We may flatter ourselves that our divisions are purely logical and conscientious, which, no doubt, to a certain extent, they are, but there is a great deal of the carnal mind at the bottom of bitter denominationalism, and there is no way to silence and destroy it like bringing it into contact with the meek and majestic personality of Jesus. Pride, bigotry and self-will cannot breathe in His presence.

The strikingly increased interest in Bible study of late years is entirely in the direction we seek. That there is such an increased interest in the Bible I make no doubt. Alike in this country and still more in America the Bible is studied with a closeness and steadiness as never before. Our great scholars are now more intensely interested in the Scriptures than in patristic and mediæval literature,

and the popular, intelligent study of the Holy Word is as undeniable as it is remarkable. As I say, all this is in the right direction ; from whatever other source it may spring, whatsoever is painful in denominationalism, does not come from the Scriptures, and there is no cure for ignorance, prejudice and intolerance, like the vast outlook, the master truths, the broad spirit of the sacred oracle.

Inter-denominational fellowship accelerates union. It is a great thing not only to know our Master better, but to know each other better. Whatever brings us together, makes us personally acquainted, is so much to the good. The zeal that God will not own, sensibly abates in fraternal assemblies. It must be recognised that through many years the Evangelical Alliance has rendered immense service in bringing together leaders and members of the various Churches. Indeed the existence of the fraternal spirit which so happily marks the modern Church, is very largely to be traced to the action and literature of the Evangelical Alliance. The more the denominations unite in worship, in council, in common evangelical action, the less and ever less will there be of the exclusive and unkindly spirit which so much dishonours us.

The missionary movement is contributing in an eminent degree to the growth of the spirit of Christian Unity. We spoke of the indirect method by which God brings about His great designs, but who would have supposed half a century ago that Christian Missions would prove a main factor in the solution of the problem of Christian Unity ! In several ways our Missions react beneficially on the home-land and the home Churches, but in no way more surprisingly or benignly than in promoting the spirit of concord. There is a spaciousness about the countries to which the missionaries go, a vastness in the work they undertake, a grandeur of speculation in their outlook and hope, which forbids littleness of mind and heart, and the exigencies of the work call forth in many ways mutuality of feeling and co-operation. All this re-acts upon us at home.

We have seen this dramatized in the great assembly which has just broken up at Edinburgh. When men set their hand to the mighty task contemplated by that assembly, they cannot long endure that fine points in doctrine and polity should divide and cripple them. The Missionary enterprise is going to be bigger than ever, which is to say that Christian Union is to be deeper, stronger, and more practical than ever. Not for long can a man have a heart as big as the world and remain a bigot.

At the present moment all parties are satisfied that dulness and deadness have settled on the religious communities of this country. There is a strange lack of enthusiasm of which we are all conscious. But need we be surprised ? For some years past the various denominations have been engaged in fierce struggles with each other, and bitter attacks and recriminations have been common. It is little matter what have been the causes, or reputed causes of these antagonisms ; the world has witnessed them, and their influence upon the world has been exactly what we might have

expected,—“And the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.” The deriders of religion make capital out of our quarrels. Not only so, sincere men with a bias toward faith and godliness are grieved by the spectacle of our conflicts, and choose to stand clear of them and us; and far beyond this, envy and strife bring a blight upon the Churches themselves. I fully believe that the religious stagnation deplored by us all, is very largely the consequence of the ecclesiastical and political battles in which, for years past, the denominations have been absorbed.

We may rejoice that something like a cosmic tide is now setting in toward peace. Surely we are never more truly Christian than when we are peacemakers! We must find some better way of settling our conscientious differences than set battles in the world's arena. We must oftener try and make the Sacramental Table a round table. Anyhow, we are all feeling for this, praying for this, striving and hoping for it. May the humble and sweet spirit of the Master fill all His disciples!

“Now the Lord of peace Himself give you peace at all times, in all ways. The Lord be with you all.”

Steps Toward Union

BY DR. CHARLES CLAYTON MORRISON, M.A.

[Editor *The Christian Century*, Chicago, U.S.A.]

(Disciples of Christ)

I FIND myself peculiarly happy in participating in this Conference on Christian union, conceived and promoted by the Disciples of Christ. I regard it as a sign of promise and prophecy. With all Christian people the Disciples share in the duty of propagating the gospel by the establishment and upbuilding of churches where churches are needed. But the distinctive and essential business of the Disciples is not found in the increase of their churches, but in serious attempts, such as this Conference, to unite the churches already existing. It is sad to say that in many quarters of our brotherhood in America the denominational spirit has fixed itself upon us with an unshakable grip. This Conference is a hopeful sign of a renaissance of our original impulse, that of calling all Christ's people into the oneness which He prayed they might ever enjoy.

As I understand the conception of the programme makers it was intended that Dr. Watkinson's address, preceding mine, should deal with those influences of a non-denominational character which work, whether purposely or not, toward union. To me it has been given to speak of the actual steps toward union to be taken directly and consciously by particular groups of Christians, whether as denominations or as local congregations.

A DISAGREEABLE SUBJECT.

To most speakers on Christian union mine is a disagreeable subject. I have heard many speeches in the past three weeks on behalf of union. The Edinburgh Conference on missions could justly be characterized as a Conference on Christian union in the light of the missionary obligation. But in all the utterances of that Conference or of this I have heard but few speakers who grappled the problem at close quarters. I do not say this to criticise. It is well that the great presuppositions of union shall be well stated before we talk about the actual mode of coming together. It is well that both the obligation and inevitableness of union should be made clear to our minds before we discuss the practical steps to be taken. Nevertheless, the problem must be brought down to earth some time, and in my heart I believe the indirect and unconscious influences of which Dr. Watkinson has so beautifully spoken have led us to the place where we are able to sit down together and, facing our differences, try if there be not some way in which, despite our differences, we can be one flock with one Shepherd.

It is perhaps well here to state that when I use the phrase Christian union I mean no mere mystical oneness, but an overt and

organized unity. The sentiments spoken yesterday by the Rev. T. E. Ruth on the notion of an inorganic unity have my complete approval. Happily we have passed out of the stage when Christian leaders apologize for the existence of the denominational order. The pretty similes of the tree and its branches, the army and its regiments, and such like, have, let us say it gratefully, fallen into disuse. Ten years ago at the World Missionary Conference held in New York City, there was much apology for denominationalism, and the most daring hope expressed was for a method of comity and co-operation among the various sects. At Edinburgh last week there was a frank and penitent deploring of our sectarian separations, and a unanimous demand for out and out union on the mission field with at least a high degree of federation here at home. In my judgment, the mystical oneness of Christ's people, instead of satisfying the ideal of unity is the strongest conceivable demand for organic union.

THE IRRESISTIBLE TREND TOWARD UNION.

There is no doubt that the most significant fact in the present day church is the irresistible trend toward union. Taken with its presuppositions and implications the Christian union movement gathers into itself all the great *motifs* of modern Christianity—the new scholarship, the new ethical ideals, the new social impulse, the new missionary vision. It is the pivotal and strategic enterprise of the kingdom of God, when viewed in the light both of the values it will express and of the ends its existence will make it possible for the church to attain. When, therefore, as a Disciple of Christ, I do my best to promote the Christian union movement, I consider that I am working not at some side task, one of the many good things it is possible for a follower of Christ to work at, but at the central and essential and most immediate problem of Christianity.

There are three phases in the Christian union movement now under such irresistible headway. There is, first, the awakening of a Christian union conscience; secondly, the overcoming of denominational inertia; and thirdly, the transcending of conscientious differences. Let us consider these in order.

FIRST PHASE OF MOVEMENT TOWARD UNITY.

First the awakening of a Christian union conscience. What repentance is in the conversion of the individual sinner, that the awakening of a Christian union conscience is in the life of the divided church. A conscience on the subject of union is primary to any sort of action toward union. Christ's followers must be made to see that denominationalism is a sin, and that it can no more be excused than can any other sin. No less in our day than in Paul's, our divisions are the fruit of a carnal mind. The man in the street whom one of yesterday's speakers quoted as saying that the thing that separated two congregations was sheer "cussedness" was not more profane than scriptural.

At the present time we are in this first phase of the Christian union movement. Many factors are co-operating to create a body of

sentiment which is bound finally to precipitate itself into a conscientious conviction on Christian union. The new social ideal that is gripping the mind of the church—*haunting* the mind of the church, I might better say—is one of these factors. Divided into sects, the church is utterly impotent before this complex task. Even the best scheme of federation helps but little. No church, divided by considerations entirely irrelevant to its essential business as a church, cumbered by machinery no more adapted to practical Christian service in one's own community than Saul's armour was to David, and distracted by a multitude of artificial denominational interests, is, or can be, competent to effectually establish the kingdom of God in any community.

THE CHURCH'S NEW SOCIAL IDEAL.

But the ideal of the kingdom of God as a social possibility is, as I have just said, haunting the mind of the church. Christian people can no longer be content with an other-world ideal. So long as they could be content with that they could be content with doing their best to pluck as many individuals as possible from the burning and save them to life everlasting. The fact that the world got no better, caused them little discomfiture. It would hardly occur to those working under such an other-worldly ideal that denominationalism was a sin or even a hindrance. Let each sect go on and save as many as it can—it is a pure matter of personal effort, anyway—and there will be a great company in heaven at last.

With the supplanting of this ideal by Christ's social ideal, a sense of helplessness has overtaken the church. Divided as we are into sects we feel that this newly discerned task is too great for us. Yet it is our task. As followers of Jesus we can do no less than accept as ours the ideal and vision that possessed Him. None but a united Church of Christ can do this work. In the face of such a task our denominationalism is a positive sin. It is after this fashion that the mind of the church is working to-day, and the practical exigencies of Christian work are thus bringing the subject of Christian unity into the realm of conscience.

MISSIONS AS A UNION FACTOR.

So much has been said at Edinburgh and in this Conference about the Missionary enterprise as a factor making for Christian unity that I need hardly go farther than to indicate the relation of the missionary problem to the Christian union conscience. The missionaries bring back to the churches of Christendom the unanimous testimony that our sectarian divisions are a stumbling block to missionary progress. Native Christians in non-Christian lands plead with the missionary societies not to send our creeds and sects into their lands. These creedal distinctions of ours, they say, are meaningless to them. The divisions based upon them are therefore meaningless and confusing. They assure us that only a united church in China and Japan and India can triumph. Thus in the conscience of the mother church of America and Britain the daughter

churches of the mission field are awakening a new conviction, the conviction that her divisions are wrong, a sin against the Lord whose Commission her missionary enterprise is designed to fulfil.

DISCOVERY OF SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER OF JOHN.

Yet a third factor in awakening the Christian union conscience is the church's discovery of the seventeenth chapter of John. Until recent years this rich chapter had been trodden over as men walk over a hidden vein of gold unsuspecting the rich treasure that lies underneath their feet. So Christ's followers have read their Master's intercessory prayer as merely His prayer. Now they are beginning to read it as their duty. His prayer is His supreme commandment. Not in edicts and formal commissions is the will of such a Lord revealed, but in His prayers. What Christ prayed for, that represents His supreme will. What Christ willed, that is the disciple's topmost duty.

Thus a church that is ever going back to Christ, a church that speaks much of His authority, is learning to regard His prayer for the unity of His disciples as a commandment of the most mandatory character. And wherever you touch Christ's authority you touch the Christian conscience, for these are one. Now the effect of this new insight into the seventeenth chapter of John is to humble the church in the shame of her divisions. Throughout the great Edinburgh Conference this text ran as a blood-red thread, "that they all may be one as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee." Unity, it was felt, is not merely an expedient, but a command of Christ. It is in this aspect of it that it goes deepest into the conscience of the church.

UNION CONSCIENCE GROWING MORE PERSONAL.

This Christian union conscience, awakened by the new social ideal, the new missionary experience and the newly-heard voice of the church's Lord praying, is the one sure guarantee of the destruction of our sectarian divisions. Up to the present time it is a vague and largely impersonal conscience, residing in the corporate life of the church. It finds its freest expression in specially devised meetings such as this Conference or that at Edinburgh, or in a ministerial association or union evangelistic services—in some meeting organized quite outside the regular church activities.

But steadily this Christian union conscience will take its seat in the personal life of Christian people. The supreme command of Christ to His church will be seen to be the keeping of the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. In that hour our present divisions will be seen to be sinful, and sectarian barriers will be burned away under the white light of Christ's supreme commandment. Not one issue that divides the church to-day, even though it be an issue involving an alleged command of Christ, is of equal importance with the supreme command to maintain the unity of those who believe on Him. The perception of this by the honest conscience of the church will bring about Christian union.

CONSCIENCE NECESSARY IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN UNITY.

And it will not only bring it about but it will maintain it, once it is established. Instead of organizing a new sect for the propagation of a new doctrine or the practice of a newly discovered ordinance this conscience will make its possessor ask whether his doctrine or ordinance or ritual is as important to the mind of Christ as is the unity of the church. He will pause long in prayer before he causes schism in the body of Christ. Likewise the church as a whole will provide a wide place for the teacher of new truth and the bringer in of new methods. She will not demand uniformity in belief or practice. Actuated by her conscience on Christian union she will be slow to declare any Christian man a heretic. In such a conscience she will be so sure of her accepted truth that she will rather risk it to the attack of an honest thinker inside the church than to the same thinker with the brand of her excommunication upon him. Once the ideal of Christian union roots itself deep in the conscience of Christ's disciples we have a power, and the only power, which will destroy the sectarian order and maintain a united church.

OVERCOMING DENOMINATIONAL INERTIA.

The second phase of the Christian union movement is the overcoming of denominational inertia. With the awakening of conscience the Christian union movement goes on to realize itself in the direction of least resistance, that is, by the union of organizations most alike in doctrine and practice. In taking this second step toward unity the obstacle to be overcome is what Dr. Gates yesterday called "the vast sodden inertia" of denominations. Here are two denominations whose differences belong to history, not to to-day. In creed and practice there is not one vital matter between them. On the face of it one would say there will be little trouble to unite them. But this is to leave out of account the most perverse hindrance which the Christian union movement encounters. Mere momentum, habit, custom, stand in the way of a free expression of the newly awakened conscience. There is an investment of money in denominational machinery. There are the denominational leaders whose relative positions might not easily carry over into a large united body. There is the denominational press which gets its life from the clannish spirit of the denomination and whose security is jeopardized with the widening mind of its constituency. Underneath all, there are the denominational pride and conceit which hold tenaciously to the sectarian name. It is unreasoning, un-Christian. But it is a fact, a brute fact, and can be overcome only by a Christian union conscience and the grace of God.

PROGRESS MANIFESTLY BEING MADE.

Yet it is being overcome. The wise world thinks so little of our sectarian possessions that we are beginning to hold them lightly ourselves. There is a strong movement for merging those sects that go by the same family name as Methodist, Presbyterian, etc. Cases

of actual union of denominations are growing in number, beginning with the marvelous unifying of the Free Churches of Scotland some years since. [Here the speaker recited in detail as instances of union: the merging of the Presbyterians and Cumberland Presbyterians in the United States, the "steps toward union" of the M. E., Congregational and Presbyterian churches of Canada, a considerable number of local unions of Baptist and Disciple churches in Canada, similar unions of Baptists and Disciples in Monroe, Waupun and Ladysmith, Wisconsin, and the Memorial Church, Chicago. As an instance of the power of denominational inertia he pointed out the "step backward" taken by the Congregational, Methodist Protestant and United Brethren bodies in the United States in their failure to effect a union after three years of encouraging conferences].

TRANSCENDING CONSCIENTIOUS DIFFERENCES.

The third phase of the Christian union movement is the transcending of conscientious differences. This, of course, is the core of the problem. The hard task is not simply to draw into a union those who are alike (though this is hard enough, as we have already seen) but those who are unlike. Our task is an utterly hopeless one unless there is some way of transcending our conscientious differences. There is no conceivable likelihood of Christendom being converted to one type of doctrine or polity or ritual. Any movement for unity which waits for its consummation until men's convictions have been brought into agreement is not a movement for unity at all. It is just another sect, doing what all the sects have always done—erecting its understanding of the Bible into a bar of fellowship against those who understand the Bible differently.

The test by which a proposal for Christian union may be judged is whether it will effectually unite Christians who are unlike. A union of Christians who are alike would not necessarily be a *Christian* union, even if it were possible to accomplish it. In order to demonstrate its character as *Christian* a union must include, or be capable of including, Christians who are unlike. Let us suppose that all the sects have to-day settled their controversies and united together in one church on the basis of their universal agreements. Such a union would not be *Christian* union, it would be simply a big denomination covering the whole of Christendom. There is no principle of permanency in it. To-morrow there will be disagreements again; if not the same disagreements as before there will be new ones. This universal denomination has no way to meet these disagreements and maintain its unity. As a consequence, new sects will inevitably be formed, and the old process of division and subdivision will be repeated.

NO HOPE IN PROLONGED ARGUMENT.

Those of us who are studying this problem of unity cannot dwell too seriously upon the considerations we are just now discussing. The differences between Christians are matters of conscience, and as

They must be brought to see alike on essentials only or there will be no union.

such cannot be surrendered or compromised without disloyalty to Christ. There is, moreover, no likelihood that further argument, prolonged indefinitely, will bring Christendom to see alike. And, finally, even though Christendom might conceivably be brought to see alike to-day, it is inevitable that there will be equally serious and vital differences to-morrow which will destroy any unity which has no other basis than coincidence of convictions.

THE OUTLINES OF THE PROBLEM EMERGING.

Here, then, we begin to see the outlines of our problem more clearly. Those who set up a platform of union consisting of many or few dogmatic "planks" are building only another sect. Union is not to be found in the direction of dogma. Those who hope to bring the religious world to see as they see, to understand the Bible as they understand it, are in a perfectly legitimate enterprise, but it is not a Christian union enterprise. A Christian union enterprise must dig far below our sectarian disagreements to the bed-rock of our essential unity—the mystical unity which some are content shall remain mystical—and build on that. This mystical oneness is the creation of the church's Lord. All men who have taken Christ as Saviour and King are one. They are one whatever their disagreement in doctrine or polity. The essential and the only essential principle of unity or union is loyalty to Jesus Christ.

This is the lesson which our foreign missionary experience is teaching us. On the mission field the churches are already entering this third phase of the union movement. There they are much farther along toward unity than are we at the home base. The determined demand of the oriental church to be allowed to work out its problem of union without interference from our occidental sects puts it in a place of leadership in this movement. [Here the speaker described in detail the union movement in West China, Southern India, Japan and Korea].

THE NEXT STEP: THE PRACTICE OF CHRISTIAN UNION.

What, then, is the next step to be taken? This: the demonstration by an undenominational body of Christians that Christian union may even now be successfully practiced. The great need of this cause that lies so near the heart of our Lord is that somebody shall begin to live it out. No panegyric of unity in a missionary conference or a Christian union conference will avail. You and I must begin to *practice* Christian union. And how shall we practice it? By what principles shall our procedure be controlled in order that we may be true to the deep fact of unity already existing, albeit only a mystical unity, and at the same time true to our own conscientious convictions which are rooted in loyalty to our Lord? I shall close with a mere outline statement of what to me are the principles which mark the limits within which the ideal of unity may be effectually worked out. These are the principles that must govern the procedure of an undenominational body that strives to practice Christian Union.

UNSWERVING EVANGELICAL LOYALTY TO CHRIST.

The first of these is unswerving loyalty to the supreme leadership of Jesus Christ. I mean this in a very evangelical sense.

Secondly, an attempt to truly practice Christian union must regard union as a supreme command of Christ, thus grounding its motives in the Christian conscience. The members of this community of practicers of Christian union will possess a conscience on unity that will operate as effectually as the Romanist's fear of excommunication. This conscience, sharply personalized, will determine the church to do those things which make for unity and to eschew those things which make for division.

Thirdly, such an attempt at practicing Christian union will create an atmosphere of the broadest toleration of widely divergent views of our Lord's revelation. It will have learned to find its unity not in its agreements as to doctrines or ordinances but in common allegiance to one Lord.

NEITHER MINISTRY NOR MEMBERSHIP TO BE INVALIDATED.

Fourthly, such a movement will therefore be able to approach the divided church with no presupposition against the Christian status of its present membership, nor against the complete ecclesiastical standing of its present ministry. The two bodies, Episcopal and Baptist, whose devotees urge their respective platforms as a basis of unity for the divided church, fail just here. No programme for unity which invalidates the ministerial standing of the great body of evangelical ministers has the remotest hope of being taken seriously. The Anglican plea for the re-ordination of the Christian ministry as a prerequisite to union, forever makes union impossible. Equally obstructive is the proposal for the re-baptism of the larger portion of evangelical Christendom. No movement can justly be called a Christian union movement which invalidates the churchly status of a large share of Christ's people. The presupposition of a Christian union movement that may hope to gain the ear of Christendom must be that evangelical Christians are indeed Christians, members of the Church of Christ, and to be fellowshipped in the fullest fraternity.*

COURTESY IN PROPAGATING THE FAITH.

A fifth principle, which such a movement for union will embody is the principle of comity or common courtesy in its evangelistic work. It will be evangelistic. It will establish and build churches. In rendering its service to the distraught church it will not forget its duty to the sinful world. But its evangelism will look to the

* In reading the proof of this address I am prompted to add this note lest my position on this point should mislead any reader concerning the practice of Disciples of Christ, with whom I am identified. While I am here speaking for myself alone, I believe my sentiment represents the deeper historic conviction of the Disciples. Many brethren disagree with me in this. Perhaps only the future will disclose whether my interpretation of the Disciples' ideals is right or wrong.—C.C.M.

kingdom of God and not to its own aggrandizement as a distinctive movement. It will guard itself constantly against becoming another sect. It will seek out unchurched territory and refuse to further complicate the scandal of divisions in territory already planted with churches.

Ideally the Disciples of Christ are this Christian union movement. By the primal impulse of Thomas Campbell we are committed to these great principles and to this sublime ideal. Coming from the Edinburgh Conference and listening to the addresses of this conference I am constrained to testify that I believe the Disciples are come to the kingdom for such a time as this. Ours is the big word that remains yet to be spoken. That word is that simple loyalty to Jesus Christ is a sufficient basis of unity for Christendom. Let us practice that unity ourselves yet more perfectly. And let us sound forth that plea with increasing sincerity and insistence until all the world shall hear.



The Difficulties and their Removal

REV. C. SILVESTER HORNE, M.A., M.P.
(Congregationalist)

I AM not perfectly certain that it is the most useful and helpful preparation for a meeting like this to come from a place of acute Civil controversy in order to discuss the question of the re-union of Christendom. At the same time I should like to begin by expressing my genuine pleasure to know that you represent a great and growing Church in America which endeavours to take, what I have sometimes thought is a role not filled amongst the Churches, the role of Mediator between the various Churches in Christendom, seeking to foment a spirit of inter-union and fellowship, with a view, of course, to the larger union which we all believe to be the purpose of our Master. I am grateful to you for having offered me a place in your programme, although I am bound to say that you have given me a very difficult place, because the subject assigned to me, by the wisdom of your committee, concerns the difficulties of union and the way to overcome them. As I shall have occasion to say, we can easily speak about the difficulties. The difficulty arises when we want to say something positive and helpful, to overcome that which exists. We may at any rate start by saying that during recent years, especially in this country, there has been going on very quietly a great discovery of common ground, especially I think amongst the Free Churches, although I do not think it has been confined to those Churches. We have a very large number of dialects, Lincolnshire, Yorkshire, etc. We are not able to understand what the Suffolk dialect is, and you will discover in London that there is a Cockney dialect. The scientific study of dialects is something that has been going on for years: and we have discovered that underneath all dialects there is the great mother tongue which is common to us all, in which these dialects are after all so many differing expressions only. What is more we have discovered that dialects themselves are good, that they help to conserve precious elements in the Anglo-Saxon speech, and our mother tongue would be a very much poorer language if not for words preserved in Yorkshire, Norfolk, etc., and it is only when you gather all these various elements, representatives of all the differing dialects, that you discover the wealth and the richness of the great mother tongue which we all try in our way to speak. I am perfectly willing to include the American dialect and to say that without a doubt your forefathers carried over there, and conserved in a special way certain elements of this great mother speech. I am going to maintain that very much the same thing has happened in connection with the Churches. Each of our great Free Churches certainly represents a dialect of the mother tongue of Christendom, and it is

perfectly true that the Baptists have conserved certain fundamental riches, shall I say of the mother tongue of Christendom? The same is, I think, true of the Quakers, of the Primitive Methodists, and undoubtedly I am bound to hold is true also of the Independents and the Congregationalists. We have been discovering this of recent years. Something like a sympathetic and scientific study, which we have made together, of the different representations that we hold of the Christian faith and Christian practice and the Christian worship is convincing us that we are going to embellish Christianity by bringing ourselves nearer to one another and steadily to enrich the bond of our common Christianity by such efforts as are represented here to-night. Now unless I believed that I would not be here to-night. By no process of impoverishment are we going to get nearer to one another. The Baptists object to this. Let us eliminate that. The Congregationalists object to something else. Let us eliminate that. The Quakers object to something more. Let us eliminate that. It is suggested that by a process of elimination you can get down to a minimum of faith and worship and practice. You cannot unite Christianity on a minimum. If we are going to be united at all we must be united on a maximum. Upon all the wealth and riches, and all the contents of our faith, worship and practice. I confess I have little faith whatever or patience with the people who are trying to solve our existing difficulties by persuading everybody to give something up until we at last arrive at a miserable deposit which it is worth no man's while to live for or die for. I felt I should like to begin along that line because that point cannot be over emphasized in this meeting. If it became the idea outside that we are endeavouring to whittle things down until we arrive at something that is so innocuous and so colourless that no decent Englishman, let alone a Yankee, can be found to object to it because it would not be worth fighting for, it would certainly injure, not help our cause. We are not occupied with that. We are not going to give up a single precious element of the New Testament, nor a precious discovery that has come to us, through all the rich and splendid tradition of the history of Christianity. We are going on the other hand to enquire what is the truth that has been enshrined in every form of worship and in every form of faith, in order that we may try and get at the Eternal and abiding heart and kernel of Christianity and say, here is the true foundation on which our united Church can rest.

When we begin to address ourselves to this subject I think it comes to us with melancholy force that this question has been in the minds of the Church from the very earliest times, ever since those sorrowful days when the Apostle Paul had to take in hand those who said "We are of Paul and we are of Apollos." The disintegrating and dividing tendencies betrayed themselves right at the very start, and yet behind all that there was that divine amazing prayer of our Saviour, in which the insistence was laid on the unity of His disciples, in which as I admit and as you think He traces the power that was to subdue the world to the realisation of their union

and in which He warned them in the most solemn tones, of the inevitable humiliation and failure that must come to any Church that permitted the spirit of division and dissension to creep in amongst the members. We trace the divisions that to-day rend Christendom even within the boundaries of a single Church. You find in almost every single Church people of diverse and often irreconcilable tastes and temperaments; within the boundaries of every Church you have diverse convictions and prejudices, those who profess varying principles, and you have within that Church all the elements which if they are not wisely handled and not subdued by the spirit of God may produce within the boundaries of a Church something like the very divisions that have proved, alas, too prominent in the history of Christendom; and yet may we not all of us say also that wherever there is a powerful, spiritual and active ministry it is possible to face these diverse and varying elements within every Church. It is possible to unite these elements in the life of the Church, so that instead of making for weakness and division this rich variety within the Church will make for its strength, and for the general spiritual wealth of the community. If Christ teaches us that lesson within the experience of each individual Christian, and within the boundaries of each individual Church then surely it must belong to His eternal will and purpose that He should teach the same lesson within the larger, wider boundaries of the great Christendom itself. Then we shall be able to see that these elements are not irreconcilable, not absolutely divisive, that it is possible to make them contribute to the richer content of Christendom even in our own time. That is the ideal in your own mind and hearts. It is toward that ideal that we are determined to move.

If the only part of my subject were the first part I could do justice to it, I could talk by the hour about the difficulties of union in any sort of way or form. I could magnify my subject, exaggerate it, give you all the impossibilities that are laid stress upon by various sects and divisions in Christendom. That is not my purpose. I am here to say that there is a faith that can remove mountains. Face the difficulties with a perfectly candid mind and then ask ourselves whether we can make some practical contribution towards, at any rate, an approximation to Christian Union. I realise at once that I am speaking here to-night to an audience that is divided in its experience. If I were simply addressing myself to those who know what it means to live in England, the difficulties of the English situation, I should take a great deal for granted. I am speaking to many from America who do not realise and who cannot realise, I think, the difficulties in England. Be thankful that you have not inherited a long tradition of civil disabilities, the result of religious differences of opinion. As soon as the state begins to punish a religious difference of opinion with a civil disability, then you begin to add to the frictions and jealousies and enmity and hatred that exist even between one type of Christianity and another. And from all that we in this country have had to suffer. You did not have these difficulties which accentuated our controversies. We have

sharpened our swords against one another until very often we have spent our time, not in attacking the enemy but firing on our own fleet. I have little hope that I shall really make the American part of my audience understand our difficulties. There are those of us who believe that Christianity is unique because it is a priestless religion, and on the other hand there are those who trace the very essence of Christianity to that priestly interference with the real essential rights of the Christian people within the Church. When you come face to face with them you realise that between these two interpretations there is now a great gulf fixed and one is inclined to give it up. It is of no use. We are talking into the air. We are not looking at things from the same standpoint.

It is said we could unite on the rite of baptism, but if we did Bradlaugh would be a Christian and Elizabeth Fry would not. If I were asked by any body of people whether I would consent to accept some formal and outward act or rite as being that which is essential and necessary to our Christianity, then I am bound to look at the question from a practical point of view and bound to say that any theory whatever that includes within the borders of the Church an avowed athiest like Bradlaugh and excludes from the bonds of Christianity one of the most saintly women that ever lived, is to me an utterly impossible theory. I cannot even discuss it.

I have been dwelling mainly on some difficulties outstanding like some frowning barriers and we say "Who is sufficient for these things?" How can these great walls of separation be destroyed? But can we not knock off some bricks and look over and see one another's faces, and later on shake hands across them. Men of the deepest Christian creed and worship are increasingly uniting in England in great humanitarian causes. Do not let us despise that. After all the great Christian cause cannot very well be served by bodies of people in substantial unity, without coming very near together and finding that they have a great deal in common. I believe there is not merely a disposition but a growing intense and earnest disposition on the part of a multitude in the Anglican Church to enter into far closer co-operation with their Non-conformist brethren in this country. I hear on all hands of little groups of men and women gathering together to discuss the possibilities of the re-union of Christendom. I know in all the districts of London people are talking about it, praying for it, meeting to hold communion with our Lord together, very much after the fashion that Dr. Leach has spoken about. We have a communion service organised by Churchmen of the Episcopal Church in order that they might by a common act of worship like this, feel at any rate, that they were forging something like bonds between them and their brethren who were outside the borders of that Church. I would not for the world that any words of mine might seem to throw any sort of doubt upon the fact that this implies a re-union spirit, just as powerful, sincere and strong within the borders of that Church as amongst yourselves. As an illustration from my own practical work, I have had preaching from my own pulpit on a Thursday evening—

to a large assembly—assembled for a spiritual service, Father Adderley, one of the leaders of the High Church movement, in full Episcopal robes. I was delighted that he should stand in my pulpit preaching, not only a straight forward, but an evangelical Gospel to my people. When you come to these great Humanitarian movements of course there is practically little difficulty to our overcoming the old prejudices and we are standing shoulder to shoulder. I venture to think that that alone is a great gain. We have got at any rate out of the old groove, the old rut which did not allow us to enter into close relationship.

[The speaker then told a story of Mr. Jacobs in which two men who had quarrelled experienced essential brotherhood in an endeavour to save a fellow man]. You get a Methodist on one side and an Episcopalian on the other trying to save their brother and they will rejoice together that that man has received the grace of God.

There is a great educative value in this kind of practical, common, humanitarian work, which we can start now, side by side. Any body can do that. No Bishop, no Pope can stop us, nor prevent our getting into close quarters in the effort to save very many of our fellows from evil. Of course if we are to stop there we have won only a very imperfect victory, but I believe it cannot stop there, that people are not the same people as before. They find their duty to one another in a variety of ways, and I believe that when that kind of work is undertaken by Christian people heartily, sincerely, and on an equality—because that is one of the conditions of the problem—on an absolute equality, then I believe the higher desire and aspiration that the highest union may be consummated will become so great as to be irresistible.

If I were to be asked “What do you think is the best thing to do?” I think I should begin first with what seems essential to everything I have said. Make yourself perfectly sure of your own position. Talk your own dialect well. Talk it as well as you can. Do not be known as the man who can speak everybody else’s dialect and has forgotten his native tongue. Make your own position secure. I am sure of this from practical experience. It is the man who is quite sure where he stands, the man who is not in the state of flux, who has found the great verities of life, who holds them with a tightening grip, who is likely to be most sympathetic to the people who have found their convictions and who are holding them with an equally tenacious grip. I believe the first thing for us all is, to make quite sure of our own position. After all there is a narrow road for each one that leadeth unto Life, and that is the type of narrowness we need not be afraid of, because it means depth of conviction, of real purpose and aim in life; and only as we come together as men and women of conviction, of principle, knowing where we stand, do we feel so secure in our own position that we can willingly enter sympathetically into the positions of other people.

When you are absolutely certain and confident and assured of your own position, you can have the friendliest possible relationship with other people, without everybody else saying, "He is going over to the Baptists or the Congregationalists." I once wrote a preface to a book to expound Christianity on Baptist principles. It was written by two Congregationalists and I wrote the preface and expounded the Baptist principles and the consequence was I converted quite a number of ordinary good Congregationalists to the Baptist position. You see the dreadful things that follow as a consequence. If you are absolutely confident of your own position, you can be just as friendly as you like with everybody else, and nobody accuses you of departing from your position because they know where you stand.

Then of course there is a further point. I think it is our bounden duty to try as far as we can to put ourselves in the place of other people, the most difficult thing I suppose in the world. That is why Jesus put it into the Golden Rule "Put yourself in the other's place." It is a difficult thing to do, but we have to try and train ourselves to do it, and by the exercise of all the powers of sympathy and imagination that we have to appreciate exactly what is the point of view of those who, after all, are fellow Christians with ourselves. // If you could by your own propagandism, bring into existence a large body of trained Christian thinkers, clear and confident in their own minds, but who are determined that for themselves they would understand and appreciate and never misrepresent the positions occupied by people who radically differ from them, you would have done a great thing in the modern life of Christendom and help materially to advance your cause. // We should miss no opportunity of standing by the side of people who differ from us in every good and positive work to which we can address ourselves. For do not let us forget we are not going to do this business by negative positions, but by great positive endeavours. It is the positive note that is going to make us one, and wherever we can join in positive Christian work, let us do it, and let us do it not as those who are making some extraordinary sacrifice and condescension to stand by someone else's side, but with the consciousness that we are all in the great brotherhood and all striving towards the great aim.

Finally, and here is what America can contribute to this great problem, it often comes to me that perhaps under the Divine Government and providence, you in that wonderful new land of yours, have in a civil and constitutional way, struck out a system, the expression of an ideal, which will be transferred into the borders of Christendom one of these days. I mean that perhaps what we want most of all is "the United States of Christendom." Every State free to develop its own life, every State to be true to its own genius, every State conserving many of its own distinctive institutions, and yet at the same time, the great federal life, giving expression to its unity of spirit and of aim, and of tradition, cherishing the great common life of all the States together. It seems to me it may be we are moving under the directing hand of God to the United States of Christendom, and let it be so. Surely the first and perhaps the last words will be

with you. Yours is a great opportunity in this modern world. You occupy a very unique position. Free from many of these controversies that make our work so difficult, your voice may make itself heard with overwhelming power. For my own part I pray to God that it may be so. I seem to see in the situation there, a light that we should not perhaps have had thrown upon it if we had been left to ourselves. Therefore for your labours and for your meditations I do indeed entreat the guidance of our good Father and Saviour, and pray that, in that which after all is the central mystery of the Christian faith, the grace of our Saviour King and the co-operation of the Eternal Spirit and the presence and blessing of the great Father of us all may rest upon you now and for evermore.

The Consummation

DR. J. H. GARRISON

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(Disciples of Christ)

IF conferences and meetings are to be measured, not by great numbers, but by the greatness of the purpose which has called them together, and by the excellence of the thoughts which have been presented, I feel sure that this is one of the notable conferences of the later years. For surely no more vital topic than this one could possibly engage the thought of man and of the Church. The discussion too has been on very broad and high lines. We have had contributions from men of rare ability to discuss such questions. The relation of this meeting to that of Edinburgh is very striking. That meeting was in the interests of Foreign Missions. Specialists in that work, Missionaries from the Field, all whose hearts were deeply interested, were there, members of Missionary Societies from throughout the Christian world, either in person or by representation, to consider the magnitude of the Field and the best way of meeting its needs. All these were laid before us, with all their vast difficulties and possibilities, and one of the needs accentuated in that conference, I think more than any other, was this, and on which there was universal agreement, that the supreme condition of the success of the Church in world-wide evangelism was its unity. Here we are, on the very eve of that conference, met as representatives of different nations and communions to consider how we may best conserve Christian Union.

The limitations of my theme confine me, strictly speaking, to the consummation of this great and divine enterprise; and yet I am sure the Chairman, and you, will allow me liberty, before speaking of the consummation, to mention a few of the principles which from my point of view are essential to the consummation itself. More than 40 years I have been a student of this problem of Unity, and it is possible that notwithstanding the able speakers who have well covered the ground, that some suggestions may be contributed to this effort.

In the first place there must be a supreme and all consuming desire for the unity of the Church—that must lie back of all action that is likely to lead to any result; and here I must say that I do not quite agree with the sentiment which has been quoted that “unity is like silence; if you speak it is broken.” That depends altogether on the kind of speaking. I once saw a cartoon on a post card in Ireland. Pat was saying to Biddie “Have you ever seriously thought about marriage?” “No,” said she, rather abruptly. Pat turned away rather disconsolate. Biddie caught him by the arm and said “Do not go away, your question has set me thinking about it”; and so I think that a persistent mentioning of the fact, and of the

possibilities, and of the needs, and of the imperative duty of unity will have good effect and set the religious world thinking about it. A desire for it, and, as has been said, a conscience concerning it, a conscience that will not allow some mere scruple or crotchet to prevent its consummation or to destroy it when it exists; the kind of conscience concerning unity that places the fulfilment of Christ's prayer, for the oneness of His Disciples, above all our mere personal opinions and predilections; and there must not only be that desire for it and conscience concerning it, but there must be faith in the possibility of its realisation. I meet a good many people that say we ought to unite, it is a very desirable thing, but it is impossible. I remember once in a great inter-denominational gathering, making a plea for unity, when a brother of another religious body following me said, "It is all very beautiful, this picture which is drawn of a United Church, but it can never be. After we get through to the pearly gates we will stack our denominational banners on the outside and go in under the one banner of Christ, but it cannot be now." Now that is lack of faith. My faith is this that what ought to be, can be, and will be in a Universe which God rules. Does God want His children to be one? No sane man doubts it. Then His Church will be one, for all the forces of God in the world are working to that consummation. The type of atheism represented by Mr. Bradlaugh in this country and Ingersoll in America is extinct; but I fear there is lingering a great deal of that more subtle atheism that doubts the ability of God to accomplish His own purposes in the world and in His own Church. We must believe then in the possibility of Unity.

That brings me to the fact, as illustrating the point of such possibility, that the Church has been one. The Church was one in the beginning. It was a united Church in the Apostolic Age. I am not saying that there was absolute uniformity, for there is plain evidence that there was not—that every man had the same point of view—they had not, but I am saying that in spite of all differences of opinion and racial and national and tribal antagonisms they were held together by their faith in Christ and love for and obedience to a common Lord and Saviour. Now what has been can be. They were one because of the simplicity of their faith in the common Lord and their love for and obedience to Him. All their former differences, and they were not small, and prejudices and antagonisms melted away in the fervent love which they bore to their common Master and to one another. That possibility of union, that fact of Union in the Apostolic Age, it seems to me, illustrates the possibility of it in our own time.

We have heard something about the minimum bases of union. What were some of the elements of that Union in the Apostolic Church? Let Paul answer the question. In Ephesians 4, we read "I beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and

through all and in you all." Those were the elements of unity according to the Apostle Paul in the Apostolic Church. I am rash enough to suggest that basis as a substitute for the Apostles, and Nicene Creeds. Have we any right to question that Paul, in this statement, does not represent the mind of Christ? I know of none. I believe he had the spirit of Christ and the mind of Christ and I am sure he represented the very effective Apostolic age in the Church. There was one body—The Church of the Lord Jesus Christ of which He was the living Head, and there was no other head. One Spirit—The Holy Spirit, which inhabited that body and gave it its life and its unity. One Hope—the hope some day of being made like the Lord Jesus Christ and living with Him for ever in fairer realms where there is no sin or death. One faith—Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The one Lord, the Son of the Living God and the only name given among men whereby we can be saved. One Baptism—A Baptism which in its form represents the burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ and testifies to that fact through all the ages as well as to the other fact of the Believer's own death to sin and his resurrection to newness of Life. Baptism, which only the Believer in Christ can obey; and which, being obeyed, sets forth in solemn witness and testimony the great fundamental fact of Christ's burial and resurrection from the dead. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all and in you all. Paul declares these were the unities of the Church, the unity of the Spirit, taught by the Spirit and created by the indwelling of the Spirit. Brethren I dare not broaden that foundation. If it represents the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, I dare not shorten it. Whatever difficulties there may be in realising these unities to-day, they are not my difficulties, they are not your difficulties. We never created them. We are not responsible for them. They represent the mind and the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, and I believe that in walking in loving loyalty to Him these difficulties alone can be removed.

So much for unity in the Apostolic Age. What became of it? We know too well how that unity was broken. First, by Grecian philosophy, formulating its metaphysical creeds out of the reach of the common people; and then how the Romish authorities got hold of it and organized it into a great religious despotism, until it became intolerant, and impelled Luther to sunder the chains and set the people free, giving them the open Bible. Unfortunately those who came into this new era of freedom abused their liberty and soon were split into many denominations. I am free to say, my friends, I would rather have Protestantism with its liberty and its divisions than Romish despotism with its union and corruption. There were hearts struggling after this union in the centuries of Protestantism. There had been union under Rome, but it was a union of despotism. There was liberty under the Lutheran reformation in Protestantism, but it was liberty associated with division.

The great problem was and is "How can we maintain both unity on the one hand and liberty on the other." That brings me to say that in the beginning of the 19th century, as many of you know,

there were great prophetic souls raised up, no doubt by God, who feeling the need of Christian Unity in the new world to which they had gone, seeing the scattered condition of the people of God, began an agitation in favour of Christian Unity, and at the same time began to look closely into the Scriptural foundations of such unity. And they thought that they discovered a solution of the problem of reconciling unity and liberty in the Church of the Living God. This was their solution in brief: Unity in faith,—the object of which is the Lord Jesus Christ, the alone Saviour of men; and liberty in all matters of opinion—liberty to think to the uttermost, liberty to investigate, liberty to see new truths, to proclaim these truths. One faith in the risen and glorified Christ, involving of course obedience to His authority as unmistakably expressed in His commandments. That was the solution they offered to the religious world. They were seeking for the only foundation. They were hunting for the things that were common. A great many people have misunderstood the intention of these reformers, Thomas and Alexander Campbell and their coadjutors. They say unity is impossible, because “it is contrary to nature. Look at nature. What variety! Unity is there, but variety,—infinite variety, therefore we cannot have Christian Union because that would be against nature.” That is to say, they interpret Christian Unity to mean uniformity, to bring all ones thoughts and opinions into exact conformity to some rule. That is not involved in Christian Union. And then you have heard others say that they are opposed to one great ecclesiasticism, with its great iron wheel of despotism, supposing it meant the formation of a vast overwhelming denomination with its great ecclesiastical head. That is far removed from our conception. Rather a group or unity, united, world wide, it may be of free and independent and autonomous congregations—one, not by ecclesiastical authority but by their common faith in the common Lord, all working together and co-operating together for the extension of Christ’s Kingdom in the world. So they chose a Catholic creed, “the Lord Jesus Christ”—the old confession of Simon Peter, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God,” concerning which Jesus said, “Upon this rock I will build my Church.” They chose a common Catholic name that everyone believes in and loves, the name of “Christian,” and for the Churches, “Churches of Christ.” Christians in the heathen world call their Churches, “Churches of Christ.” There is no other name they can be called by, and denominational titles will soon disappear. These reformers of a hundred years ago took the common Name, the common Creed, the common Baptism,—the one Baptism which all acknowledge to be authoritative, to be scriptural Baptism, the original practice of the Apostolic Church and they said, “We will occupy this common ground so as to give no offence to the brethren, we will yield our peculiarities so far as making them tests of fellowship and will stand on this common ground.” As our brother, Mr. Horne, well pointed out to-night as undesirable, it is not our purpose to eliminate everything that may be characteristic of the various religious bodies,—not by any means. We need every truth emphasized by

every religious body in Christendom. It all belongs to us. When Paul was living, the Church at Corinth had its divisions and schisms. You will remember that He said to them, "All things are yours and ye are Christ's." Every truth taught by Paul, Peter and Apollos is yours. "All are yours," and so we say that Christian Union embraces all truth, emphasised by every Christian body, but the subordinate truths must not be put into the foundation on which the Church lives, must not be made terms of fellowship, because some may not be able, as Thomas Carlyle shrewdly remarked, "To preeceive these truths and they would thereby be shut out."

Now this was their plea. Is it any wonder it has gone out by leaps and bounds? More than a million and three hundred thousand are enrolled under that banner that has upon it the one Name, the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. We had that problem of liberty and union confronting us a few years ago in our national life in the United States, during the agitation of the question of slavery. "Let us give up the union and have liberty for the slave." There are others who said, "Let us maintain the union, but hold on to slavery." Webster stood up in the Senate and said "Liberty and Union," not liberty or union; "liberty and union, one and inseparable, now and for ever." This was the answer also of these reformers to the question of harmonising liberty and union, not one or the other, but both. Unity in faith, liberty in matters of opinion and interpretation.

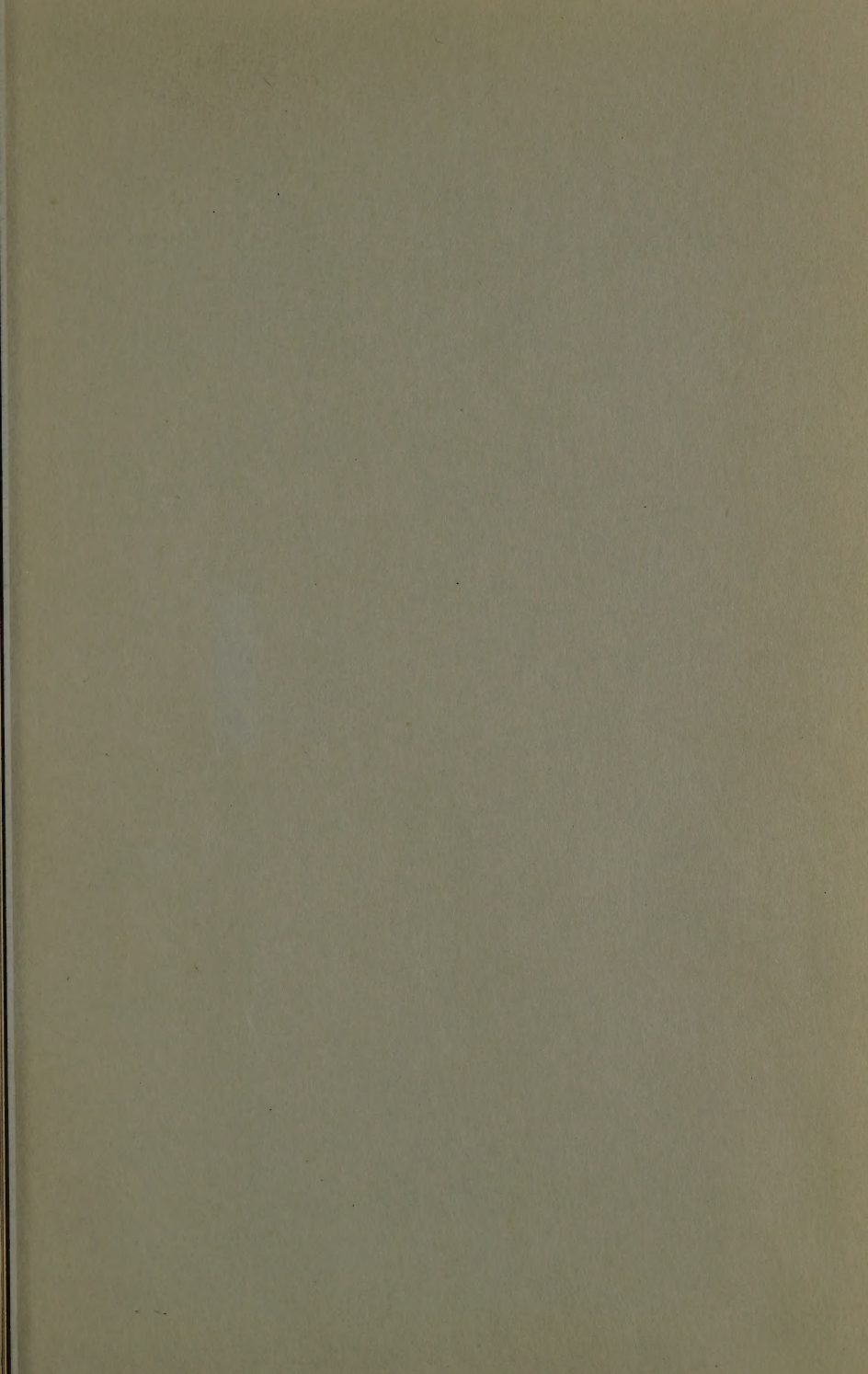
Now as to the consummation. It is coming, brethren. Do not doubt it. The Southampton Water, when King Canute proceeded to the edge, did not recede, despite his command. The divided sectaries that to-day are lending their influence against this great cosmic movement, in favour of unity, are the modern Canutes. The tide is coming in. The union is coming, but it must grow. It cannot be manufactured. Any union that is worth while must grow. We cannot emphasize that fact too much, and the increasing growth of spirituality alone will make it possible. Divisions have their origin in carnality. Paul preaches that very clearly. It is only as we grow out of the flesh and up into Christ who is our living Head and become more like Him, that we can be one. Brethren, that is my hope. I say to you frankly, that is my hope of Christian Union. When we get closer to Him in the atmosphere of His life and His presence and look into His face and catch something of His mighty spirit of world conquest, then our little difficulties, our divisions, at last will melt away. Every man that is doing anything to cultivate the spiritual life, therefore, is promoting the cause of Christian Union, and so I have hope that it is coming, is coming through growth. We are all coming nearer to Christ and, as I have said, in His magic presence, all our divisions will fall away. We cannot face the world's needs seriously and undertake to do the work laid upon us and maintain our little, narrow, sectarian prejudices. Another thing, we cannot meet and pray and sing and plan together, without coming closer to each other. I believe in such meetings as these. I believe in such a meeting as we had in Edinburgh, in such a great National gathering as we had at Chicago,—a Laymen's interdenominational

Missionary gathering. These meetings bring us together, where we look into each other's faces and catch each other's spirit, realise the value of our brother who wears another name and how much he is sacrificing for the world's good.

It is coming. Too many men and women are praying for it to come, for it not to come. Does not God hear prayers? Does He not answer prayer? Thousands and tens of thousands of consecrated hearts all round the globe, making a girdle of prayer, are beseeching the throne of Grace that "they all may be one, that the world may believe." Think you that that prayer will remain unanswered? It may not be, and just in proportion as we hear the Master calling us out into the heathen world and undertaking to grapple with these difficulties our hearts will be knit together.

Well, what will be the result when this union is consummated and all God's people are one?—not a denominational name—not a denominational flag fluttering in the breeze. No shibboleth on any page of religious literature will separate the people of God, but all one in Him, loving each other and working together. What will be the result of it? 1. A speedy evangelisation of the world. Every man on this earth will have the opportunity of hearing and loving and accepting the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That will be a great consummation, will it not? But that will not be all. 2. There will be thousands and tens of thousands of sinners at home, to whom our divisions have been a stumbling block, that will come flocking into the Church of God as doves to their windows, when we get our divisions out of the way. 3. We shall be so strong, when we girdle the globe as a united Church, giving our united voice for peace, that international peace will hover its white wings over the earth and there shall be no more war. 4. Our social abominations, our public houses, our drinking houses, our saloons, these licensed dram shops, everyone will be shut up when we have a United Church. Nothing but the divisions among us, which will weaken our moral force, keeps them alive to-day. Once joined together they will be crushed beneath the feet of the marching hosts of God. 5. All our political corruptions and abominations and our oppressions will be put away because a United Church will have a voice that will be heard in civic affairs as well as in religious affairs. 6. The poor will be cared for, the widow's and the orphans tears wiped away, and the needy will be provided for as they cannot be in our divided condition. In a word, there will be joy on earth—among all the united hosts and such songs we shall sing in those glad days! I have longed for it and prayed for it, but my head is getting grey waiting. I am wondering whether the Master will not give me a vision of the United Church before I go home. Will there not be joy among the angels of Heaven. Such songs they will sing when they look upon a Church dwelling together in brotherly love, as even Heaven never heard before. And think of the joy that will come into the heart of the Christ who loved us and gave Himself for us! When His heart was breaking with the wide world's sin, He prayed that they all might be one and He will as well look down upon His disciples standing together with a united

front and His great heart will be filled with joy. And the loving All-Father, will not His heart be filled with joy also, as He sees His children, once striving together in mortal conflict, now abiding together in love and peace? Oh, will not His heart be glad when he looks down upon an earth redeemed from sectarian strife and division, upon a United Church, upon a redeemed world!



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